

linton's necktie
om brother,
ot Lewinsky

ME (R) — The infamous
old-and-navy necktie worn
by Bill Clinton during a tele-
vised ceremony was a gift
from his brother Roger and
sister from Monica Lewinsky.
The Italian woman who
claims she helped choose a
Castellon necktie for Clinton
was introduced to Reg-
gintoo and accompanied
him on a shopping trip
around Rome's fashion bou-
levards in December 1996.

exan millionaire
ays \$5 million to
lone pet dog

ONDON (R) — A Tex-
millionaire is paying \$5 mil-
lion to produce a televi-
sion special about his pet dog
according to a BBC pro-
gramme. The laboratory
already received some \$1 mil-
lion from the dog, which is
colle, part Albatron.

horror novelist
admits phobias

ONDON (R) — Crime
horror novelist Stephen
King confessed that he
really frightened him
spiders, bugs and
places. The spine-chilling
American author who
scared readers around
the world said he had never
a ghost but he
believed in all the home-
conjured up in his
fictional bestsellers. King
confessed to reporters that
there are some very scary
things I am afraid of. I am
terrified of spiders, snakes
don't bother me. But I like
bugs. Closed in places that
bother me. Heights do.

Streaker protest
against society
injustices

ONDON (R) — A
dent was convicted Monday
of disturbing the
Rembrandt in the
Gallery and running
near the House of
Parliament in a protest
against "society's
injustices." Vincent
admitted "screaming
Parliament Square on
26 and taking off his shirt
then painting a yellow
for the British pound as
a self-portrait of Rembrandt
on Aug. 4. The paint
wasn't damaged.

Swedish girl
sleepwalks off
second floor

VAENERSBORG (R) —
A 10-year-old Swedish
girl jumped out of a
window on the second
floor and sprained her
Elfsborg's Leona Almqvist
newspaper
Monday. Frida Larsson
the paper "I had put out
cats at night and locked
front door. So when I
saw Julia I went to help
her out with the cat."
I thought I may have
ended up outside.

Woman claims
to be half-sister
of John Lennon

ONDON (R) — A
old English woman said
she was a half-sister of
John Lennon. The Sun
per printed copies of her
adoptive certificates of
Pedersen, who was
Victoria Elizabeth Lennon
Liverpool to Julia Lennon,
Beatle's mother.

Puppet replica
of Spielberg
sells for \$16,500

BEVERLY HILLS (R) —
A puppet replica of
Spielberg sold for \$16,500
during an auction of
puppets. The puppet
dressed in a red shirt
and grey sweater and
metal eyeglasses was
used at \$5,000 to \$8,000
before the auction.

Tarawneh: King enjoys very high morale

NEW YORK (Petra) — Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh on Wednesday said His Majesty King Hussein is in good health condition and enjoys a very high morale. During a telephone call with a Petra correspondent in New York, Tarawneh said King Hussein had completed the second round of treatment, adding that the King will go back to Mayo Clinic to start the third round of medical treatment soon. On his meeting with the King on Tuesday, Tarawneh said the King gave his directives to the new government. Tarawneh was expected to leave Washington for Amman on Thursday.

Jordan Times

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U.S. rejects Libya's request for a U.N. delay on Lockerbie resolution

Agencies

IN A letter made public Wednesday, Libya asked the Security Council to delay a decision on a U.S.-British proposal to try two suspects in the Pan Am bombing in the Netherlands until it can study the plan further, but the U.S. rejected the request.

"This proposal is non-negotiable and mandatory. Libyan study of the proposal is no reason to delay passage of this resolution in the Security Council," said White House deputy press secretary Barry Toiv.

The letter from the Libyan deputy ambassador, Ramadan A. Barg had said that "Libya is anxious to arrive at a settlement of this dispute and to turn over a new page in its relations with the states concerned."

The letter, the first official reaction from Tripoli on the proposal, said Libya's judicial authorities need more time to study the proposal and asked for

international experts "more familiar with the laws of the states" to help them.

The letter said Secretary-General Kofi Annan needed more time to provide Libya with assistance, assuring "that the two suspects appear in a court in a neutral third country as soon as possible."

But Toiv said Libya's letter to the Security Council is "not a response as far as we're concerned."

"This proposal accords with what they've said that they would agree to in the past and we see no reason for delay on Libya's part," Toiv told reporters on Martha's Vineyard, where President Bill Clinton is vacationing.

U.S. and British officials announced their proposal Monday in a bid to end a 10-year impasse over the Pan Am bombing, which killed 259 people aboard Pan Am Flight 103 and 11 people on the ground in Lockerbie, Scotland.

The council would have to endorse the deal

because previous U.N. resolutions stipulated that the trial take place only in the United States or the United Kingdom. Libya has refused to turn over the two suspects, fearing they would not get a fair trial in either country.

The letter said Libya was surprised to learn that the Security Council was already considering a resolution backing the initiative and will suspend U.N. sanctions on Libya as soon as the suspects appear for trial in the Netherlands.

The council met Wednesday to resume discussions on the draft. Libya asked for a decision on the resolution to be postponed until Libya's judicial authorities have studied it.

According to the draft, the council will consider additional sanctions if Libya doesn't promptly turn over Abdul Basset Al Megrahi and Lamien Khalifa Fhimah for trial. Current sanctions include an air embargo and curbs on arms sales and on certain financial and travel activities.

CIA cites Iraqi tie to factory

Sudan to try Clinton in absentia, calls on world leaders to send over experts

Agencies

SUDAN'S JUSTICE ministry is pressing charges against U.S. President Bill Clinton over last week's U.S. missile attack which destroyed a Khartoum pharmaceutical factory, officials said Wednesday.

Prosecuting General Ali Al Zaki told reporters that the justice ministry had filed a local lawsuit against Clinton for "violating the Sudanese criminal code and ordering the bombing of the Al Shifa drug factory."

Zaki said the charges against the U.S. president include "damaging property, physically harming and intimidating civilians and using violence and criminal force against the state."

He said an investigation being conducted by the authorities in the Omar Al Mukhtar neighbourhood where the factory was located would "determine the value of the damage and the harm to the Sudanese people due to shortages of drugs caused by the destruction of the factory."

"American President Clinton will be tried in absentia if he fails to show up before the Sudanese judiciary," Zaki said, adding that "it is quite natural that a lawsuit is filed against someone who breaks the law."

Drawing a fresh link to an old American foe, U.S. intelligence officials say they believe the Sudanese plant destroyed was working with Iraq to make deadly nerve gas.

Under increasing pressure to explain why the United States attacked the Shifa pharmaceutical plant known for

making pain killers and malaria medicine, U.S. officials cited findings that a chemical in soil at the plant is unique to Iraq's nerve gas recipe.

The assessment is based in part on intelligence interceptions of phone calls, a U.S. official said Tuesday.

U.S. officials now concede their initial justification for the raid — evidence linking the plant to Osama Ben Laden, a Saudi multimillionaire accused of organising the Aug. 7 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa — is less concrete than initially claimed.

The U.S. intelligence official, who spoke Tuesday on condition of anonymity, said there is no direct financial relationship between the plant and Ben Laden. The embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania killed 257 people, including 12 Americans.

Clinton administration had some intelligence indicating contact between a senior Shifa official and individuals associated with Ben Laden's suspected terrorist network.

"We knew there were fuzzy ties between him and the plant but strong ties between him and Sudan and strong ties between the plant and Sudan and strong ties between the plant and Iraq," the intelligence official said.

U.S. officials say they have intelligence indicating that scientists in Baghdad worked with counterparts at the plant in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, on a formula — unique to Iraq — for making the deadly nerve agent VX.

A CIA clandestine operation netted a

soil sample from the plant grounds containing traces of the man-made chemical EMPTA, officials have said.

"Iraq is the only country we're aware of" that uses EMPTA in making VX, the intelligence official said. "There are a variety of ways of making VX, a variety of recipes, and EMPTA is fairly unique."

Iraq strongly denied the charges.

Iraq's only contact with the factory was to fill pharmaceutical contracts, Nizar Hamdoun, the Iraqi U.N. ambassador, told reporters. The U.S. charges are "part of the effort to try to muddle the whole situation in order to cover up the problem that they've had with the bombing of the Sudan," Hamdoun said.

Meanwhile, Sudan's powerful parliamentary speaker, Hassan Al Turabi, on Wednesday denied that Ben Laden, the Saudi-born dissident accused of being behind the embassy bombings, had been involved in terrorism during his stay in Sudan, where he worked as a contractor.

Turabi said Ben Laden's company had built a road and an airport and had launched farming projects, but had left because he did not want to upset ties between Sudan and Saudi Arabia, which has stripped him of his citizenship.

"Osama Ben Laden was a freedom fighter for the Afghans... and was supplied by the Americans with rockets they did not give to any other country," he said.

"Unfortunately all those who were fighting with the Afghans, after the

Russians went out, were considered a danger because the United States did not want to see Islam succeed the communists... so they just started calling them terrorists," Turabi said. The United States had chosen to attack Afghanistan, where Ben Laden based himself after leaving Sudan in 1996, because the Afghan Taliban "now have taken full control and they have started establishing an Islamic state."

Turabi said Sudan had sought U.N. inspectors to examine the Shifa plant even though it did not fully trust the United Nations.

"We knew how they operated in Iraq to look under the pillows for mass destruction arms and chemical arms," he said.

The U.N. Security Council has deferred a decision on Sudan's request. Turabi said that if Washington blocked it, Sudan would invite independent scientists from Europe to inspect the plant.

"We will ask the governments to finance their own people so they are not our employees. And we will ask them to produce evidence and show it to the world — if the truth makes much difference in the world," Turabi said.

He said Britain had angered Sudan by supporting the U.S. strike and said the damage to what had been a gradual improvement in Sudan's relations with its former colonial power was "very serious."

Sudan has recalled its ambassador and his deputy from London and has asked Britain to withdraw its top two diplomats from Khartoum, where protesters stoned the embassy Saturday.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, stands in front of the Royal Court on Wednesday with a group of entrepreneurs in the process of establishing the 'Young Entrepreneurs Association' (Photo by Boghos)

Regent, young entrepreneurs discuss their role in economic development

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, met at the Royal Court Wednesday with a number of young entrepreneurs in the process of establishing an association aimed at increasing its interaction with the Jordanian society and participating in the country's economic development.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Industry and Trade Mohammad Saleh Hourani and Minister of Finance Michel Maro.

Prince Hassan underlined the role which the Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA) can play towards the development process in the Kingdom. He said the private sector can achieve economic development and create job opportunities towards reducing poverty and unemployment.

Prince Hassan underlined the importance of supporting the creative people's endeav-

ours aimed at developing the national economy and boosting its productivity.

According to the Regent, industrial and commercial institutions' contributions in dealing with the social and humanitarian dimensions constitute the right criteria in assessing the success of industrial and commercial projects. He stressed the need for these institutions to shoulder their responsibility towards the Jordanian society.

Urging the private and public sectors to join hands in this endeavour, the Regent said that the two sides ought to coordinate and integrate their steps within a comprehensive approach that consecrates the principle of partnership so that all concerned people can bear their responsibilities towards attaining the development targets and a better life for the citizens.

Prince Hassan listened to a briefing about YEA plans and

objectives of which will be complementary to similar institutions operating in Jordan.

YEA representatives outlined the practical steps which they intend to take in helping the youths of Jordan put their potential to practice in searching for financial resources for their pioneering schemes. They said that they plan to establish a database that can provide the right information about the needs of the economic sector in Jordan.

They said that the YEA will provide the appropriate mechanism for young entrepreneurs to express their views, discuss their problems and contribute to the national economic policy.

Prince Hassan will be meeting with representatives of the various Jordanian sectors including political parties, professional associations, civic institutions, and chambers of trade and industry.

Predicting crisis will be over soon Mulki urges W. Amman residents to ration water

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Water and Irrigation Minister Hani Mulki said on Wednesday he was confident the seven-week-old water shortage and contamination crisis would be solved soon.

He also urged residents of Western Amman, hit hardest by the crisis, to ration consumption after the Zai Water Treatment Plant (ZWP) last week began increasing quantities of water supplied to their areas.

"I am very optimistic that in a very short period of time the problem will be over," Mulki told the Jordan Times.

"A scientific solution [to treat the problem] is being positively implemented, all indications are in the right direction and I hope that we can set a date next week" for the full resumption of water supplies, he added.

"By Friday, we hopefully would have completed one week of proper water distribution to areas affected by the problem, which means that everyone would have had drinking water," said Mulki, who also took over the portfolio of energy and mineral resources in a government change last Thursday.

discoloured domestic water supplies.

Officials and technicians at the ZWP, normally supplying around 40 per cent of Amman's water needs, have been working round-the-clock to raise output after emergency supplies of improved activated carbon arrived from Holland last week.

The station, which pumped around 120,000 cubic metres of water per hour before the crisis, is gradually restoring pumping capacity.

According to one water expert, the chemical agents have helped eliminate the water's unusual "taste and smell."

Others said a recent drop in soaring summer temperatures helped reduce unusual high levels of algae found in water supplies reaching ZWP, which in turn, harmed its filtering capacity.

"Plus, they have been pumping water in batches which enabled them to control the quality of water coming out," added the expert who requested anonymity.

The government, at the orders of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has also decided to exempt residents of areas hit by the water crisis from paying water bills for the months of July through September in an apparent move to ease public anger.

But the move has raised some official concern that citizens would abuse August and September free water supplies.

"If water is for free it should not mean that people should abuse supplies and throw water away," said one official.

Meanwhile, Mulki urged citizens to ration water consumption to back official water restoration efforts and to enable all residents get their share of water.

"Regardless of the water ministry efforts, we can only ensure that water reaches all citizens if they also cooperate."

Many Jordanians say they are reeling under the effects of extra spending on bottled water and water supplies from private wells brought to their homes in tankers at soaring rates.

The water crisis climaxed on August 9 with the resignation of former water minister, Munther Haddadin, who enraged many Jordanians by responding to the water problem with a series of contradictory statements — initially blaming it on unusual levels of algae and then on operational and human errors at the ZWP.

The government on Saturday forwarded a 100-page report on the water crisis that was completed by an investigation committee to the Amman prosecutor.

Officials said legal action might be taken against any party found guilty of negligence.

The committee was appointed by the former government on Aug. 4.



A Palestinian is arrested in the Old City. Islamic authorities closed Al Aqsa Mosque compound to visitors for a second day running Wednesday to protest the beating by Israeli police of a Palestinian who sought refuge inside. "We are holding a meeting tomorrow about what to do but the mosque is definitely closed to tourists today and tomorrow," Adnan Al Hussein, director of the Islamic religious authority said (AFP photo)

U.N. panel says Iraq embargo should be lifted

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. Security Council should lift its eight-year embargo against Iraq, a U.N. panel of human rights experts said Wednesday in a statement critical of the sanctions' effects on

'Any embargo that condemns innocent people to hunger, disease, ignorance and even death without attaining the objectives for which it was declared is a flagrant violation of the economic, social and cultural rights of the people concerned'

Members of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities said the embargo deprives the entire Iraqi population of food, care and education.

They noted "with grave concern the immense suffering endured by the Iraqi people, and by children in particular," adding there is an "unacceptable decline in levels of health, nutrition, health care and employment and in agriculture."

They urged all governments, including that of Iraq itself, to enable the delivery of food, medical supplies and other aid.

destroyed its long-range missiles and biological, chemical and nuclear weapons before the Security Council will lift the sanctions.

U.N. weapons inspectors are waiting for more instructions from the Security Council before deciding how and when they'll try to search for banned weapons in the face of Iraq's decision to stop cooperation, chief inspector Richard Butler said Tuesday.

Baghdad froze cooperation after Butler refused to certify Iraqi compliance. The move paralysed inspections since inspectors can't conduct searches without Iraqi escorts.

The Iraqi government has claimed the sanctions are responsible for the deaths of over 500 children a month. The sub-commission, which has been meeting in Geneva this month, adopted its decision by consensus.

The statement said: "Any embargo that condemns innocent people to hunger, disease, ignorance and even death without attaining the objectives for which it was declared is a flagrant violation of the economic, social and cultural rights of the people concerned."

Weapons experts must certify that Iraq has

Upsurge in fighting revives debate on Israeli pullout from Lebanon

Agencies

ISRAEL'S ASSASSINATION of a Lebanese militia chief and the rocket attack on northern Israel which quickly followed revived calls here Wednesday for an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon.

"This affair shows how absurd it is to maintain a military presence inside Lebanon," said Yossi Beilin, a former minister and Labour Party member of parliament who has spearheaded demands Israel quit the buffer zone it has occupied in south Lebanon for 20 years.

The occupation "is supposed to provide security for the civilian population in northern Israel but the effect has been the opposite — the region is living under constant threat," Beilin told AFP.

The latest incidents began with the assassination Tuesday of Hussam Al Amin, a military chief of the Shiite militia Amal, who was killed when an Israeli helicopter gunship annihilated the car in which he was driving in what Israeli officials described as a deliberate and well-planned hit.

In response, Lebanese guerrillas rained dozens of Katyusha rockets onto northern Israel Tuesday night, slightly injuring 10 civilians and two soldiers and causing widespread damage.

It was the worst attack on

Israel from Lebanon in a year and the first major assault since the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced in April that it conditionally accepted a 20-year-old U.N. resolution calling for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon.

"The elimination of someone responsible for deadly military operations against Israel doesn't trouble my conscience, but we can ask questions about where such actions are taking us," Beilin said.

"The only real solution is to withdraw from Lebanon," he said.

Another Labour lawmaker and former general, Uri Orr, also questioned the decision to assassinate Amin when Amal is not Israel's main adversary in south Lebanon.

"The army should have weighed the consequences before eliminating the Amal official," he said.

A government spokesman showed no such regrets. "When we have the opportunity to strike at terrorists, we do it in the knowledge that in the long run such actions will have an effect," said Moshe Fogel, director of the government press office.

Fogel said the latest incidents, which took place during a broader upsurge in fighting in Lebanon, would not deflect the government from its stated aim of carrying out a negotiated withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon.

Netanyahu discussed the rising tensions in Lebanon Wednesday at the weekly meeting of his inner security cabinet, officials said.

Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, the cabinet's leading hawk, called during the meeting for military strikes against Lebanese civilian targets, Israeli Radio reported.

Sharon argued that such attacks would put pressure on Syria to curb attacks on Israel by Amal and the larger Shiite movement Hizbullah, it said.

Commentators debating the wisdom of Tuesday's assassination of Amin recalled the 1992 Israeli army strike which eliminated top Hizbullah official Sheikh Abbas Musawi.

A month after his assassination, a bomb ripped through the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 25 persons.

Israel believes the bombing was carried out by Iranian agents in response to Musawi's slaying.

Meanwhile, a member of an Israeli-backed Lebanese militia was killed Wednesday in sporadic exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Lebanese Islamists, the Israeli army spokesman said.

The militia man from the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) was killed when Hizbullah, an Iranian-backed Shiite Islamist force, fired mortars, machine guns and rockets at positions of the Israeli army and the SLA, the Israeli army said.



HOUSE BURNED IN HEBRON: Israeli soldiers Wednesday evacuate a Palestinian man suffering from smoke inhalation from a house in Hebron. A Palestinian house next to the town's Jewish settlement was gutted by fire in what Palestinians charged was an arson attack by militants (AFP photo)

Hamas leader calls for violence in response to U.S. missile attacks

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The spiritual leader of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, called on Muslims Wednesday to respond "with violence" to U.S. raids last week which hit targets associated with renegade Saudi businessman Osama Bin Laden.

"We expect that the Arab and Islamic peoples will respond with violence and anger to the U.S. policies," said Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, as some 300 Hamas supporters burned Israeli and U.S. flags during a protest

rally here. "Our response will be against the Israeli occupation and in support of our presence in the land of Palestine," Yassin said. "Israel is the other face of America."

Groups of Hamas demonstrators called on the military wing of Hamas, Izzedin Al Qassam, to carry out new suicide attacks on Israel in response to the U.S. raids. During the protest, supporters pushed the wheelchair-bound Yassin over a

U.S. flag that was being trampled on the ground and chanted slogans branding U.S. President Bill Clinton a "coward" and praising Ben Laden as the "beloved of God."

Yassin also called for popular committees to be formed in support of Sudan and to collect donations to rebuild a pharmaceutical factory destroyed in the raid on Khartoum and which the United States says was being used to make ingredients for chemical weapons.

Yilmaz on three-day Mideast tour

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz begins a three-day tour of the Middle East on September 5, said the premier's press office Wednesday.

Yilmaz will visit Jordan, Israel and the occupied territories, accompa-

nied by a large press and business delegation, said the office.

High-level visits between Israel and Turkey have increased since the two countries signed a framework agreement on military cooperation in February

1996. Several regional countries, including Syria, Iran and Egypt, take a dim view of this accord which they see as a threat targeting Arab nations. Israel and Turkey categorically deny such intentions.

EU urges Israel not to build more in Golan

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union Wednesday urged Israel not to expand settlements on the Golan Heights, saying it would raise questions about the country's commitment to the Middle East peace process.

"If such a plan is implemented it would represent a significant setback to the efforts to resume the latest Israeli-Syrian negotiations," the EU said in a statement. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in 1967. "It would also constitute a further complication for the

implementation of the principle of 'land for peace' and raise questions about Israel's commitment to the peace process," the EU said.

"In this context, the European Union reiterates its position that settlements in the occupied territories are illegal and in contravention of international law," the EU said in a statement.

The EU said it was responding to reports that Israel had approved plans for a further 2,300 new homes and 2,500 holiday units to be built in the Golan Heights.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Algerian rebels hid 'under state guest house'

ALGIERS (AFP) — A suspected Islamist hideout where five teenagers were killed at the weekend was part of a tunnel network passing under the main state guest house, press reports said Wednesday. Liberté daily said the suspected Islamists "could easily have taken explosives into the underground network since they were apparently able to come and go without difficulty." The possible political and media consequences of such an act were "unimaginable," the daily said. Djenane Al Mithak is the main state residence for visiting foreign delegations. According to Liberté, security forces had to break through a door under the Djenane Al Mithak residence to retrieve the bodies of the five teenagers murdered after straying into the tunnel hideout.

14 die in Turkey's Kurdish conflict

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Turkish troops have killed 12 Kurdish rebels for the loss of two soldiers in the country's turbulent southeast, security officials said Wednesday. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas and the troops were killed in overnight clashes in three different southeast provinces, a statement from the emergency rule governor's office said.

Afghan opposition leader in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Leading Afghan opposition figure Abdul Rashid Dostum met Turkish officials for talks on Wednesday, Turkey's Foreign Ministry said. "General Dostum is in Ankara today and is taking part in certain meetings including at the Foreign Ministry," ministry spokesman Necati Uenal told a news conference. Turkey does not recognise the Taliban Islamic Movement, which controls about 90 per cent of war-torn Afghanistan. "At the moment there is no existing central authority in Afghanistan," Uenal said. He said Turkey was discussing the situation in Afghanistan with Pakistan, one of only three countries to recognise the Taliban government.

Turkish public sector workers end strike

ANKARA (AFP) — Some 3,500 state employees in Ankara Wednesday ended a strike after their union reached an agreement for 100 per cent pay hikes with the city's Islamist mayor, the Anatolia news agency reported. The workers began their indefinite strike on August 4 after talks for higher pay broke down between the union and city authorities, said Anatolia. They returned to work after the accord was signed with Melih Gökçek, mayor of the city, which has over three million residents.

Suspect in killing of Iran prison head dies

TEHRAN (R) — A man arrested for the assassination of a former Iranian prison chief died on Wednesday from wounds suffered at the time of his arrest, the official IRNA news agency reported. "The terrorist MKO member Ali Akbar Akbar Deh Balade, who was injured at the scene of the martyrdom of Asadollah Lajevardi and was arrested, died despite attempts of the doctors to keep him alive," IRNA quoted an information ministry source as saying. There was no official word on how the man was injured but the Iran-based Mujahideen Khatol (MKO) armed opposition group, which claimed responsibility for the assassination, said there had been a fierce shootout at the scene of the attack. The Mujahideen denied any of its members had been arrested.

'Palestinian-Israeli talks at dead end'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations have reached a dead end despite Israeli claims of progress and only energetic U.S. intervention can break the impasse, a senior Palestinian official said Wednesday.

Nabil Abu Rudeina, a close aide to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, said significant gaps remain on the central issue of long-overdue Israeli withdrawals from more of the West Bank, even though Israel claimed this week to have moved closer to a U.S. compromise proposal for the pullbacks.

"The Israeli side has not made any proposals that satisfy us," Abu Rudeina told AFP, adding that Israeli ideas floated last week "are not in keeping with the U.S. initiative."

"The gap between us and the Israelis is still there and [direct] contacts will not bridge the gap. Therefore what is needed is a return of the U.S. administration to carry out an active and an effective role," he said.

Abu Rudeina's statement contrasted with more optimistic evaluations of the state of the negotiations from Israeli officials and even Arafat himself, who Monday described the latest Israeli offers as "a beginning."

The dispute centres on the terms of Israel's acceptance of a U.S. compromise package calling for the transfer of an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank to Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in exchange for tougher Palestinian action to halt anti-Israeli violence.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, remaining loyal to headline right-wing nationalists who dominate his government, had rejected the U.S. proposal for months.

But he, this week, approved a variation under which Israel would code 10 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians and declare another three per cent "nature reserves" where Palestinian powers would be very limited.

Arafat has said he could accept the notion of some of the transferred land remaining nature reserves, implying limitations on building and other activities.

But Palestinian officials said Netanyahu was still trying to impose excessive restrictions on Palestinian authority over these areas.

"Progress on the definition of the three per cent could bridge the gap but the Israeli proposals put forward so far would leave the area under effective Israeli control," Abu Rudeina said.

Abu Rudeina went on to suggest that time was running out for the negotiations and that Arafat could take a harder line in two major speeches he is scheduled to give next week at a summit of the Non-Aligned Movement and on September 28 before the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

If no progress in the talks is in sight, "Arafat will set out clearly in his two speeches the Palestinian position on all the questions posed," Abu Rudeina said.

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 477311-19 PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes

15:10Cartoon — Animated Hero Classics
15:30Cartoon — The Animal Park
16:00Doc — L'Ecole des Enfants
16:30Doc — Blue Water Dreaming
17:00NBA
18:15Students
19:00Le Journal
19:15Science Magazine — L'oeuf De Colombi
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — Family Matters
20:00The Great Romances
20:30Drama — Dr. Quinn the Medicine Woman
21:10Oprah Winfrey
22:00News in English
22:30Feature film — "Zis"
23:59Comedy — Can't Hurry Love?
00:30End of T.X.

Friday Programmes

15:10Cartoon — The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin
15:30The Bonowers
16:00Feature film — "The Laker Girl"
18:15French quiz show — Les Cles de Fort Boyard
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Programme — Allo La Terre
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00Life on the Digital Edge
20:30The Story of Television
21:10Babyion-5
22:00News in English
22:30Big Sky (Ep. 3)
23:59End of T.X.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

04:41Fajr
06:02(Sunrise) Duha
12:37Dhuhr
16:14'Asr
19:12Maghreb
20:34Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifish Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4623666
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifish Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Hot weather conditions will prevail during the weekend with temperatures higher than average by 3-4 degrees centigrade, and winds northwesterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, it will be hot, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman21/36
Aqaba27/40
Deserts20/39
Jordan Valley26/40

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 35, Aqaba 37
Humidity readings: Amman 29 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun30
Jerash38
Um Qays37
Madaba36
Petra39
Dead Seas43

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY AMMAN:

Dr. Issam Asmar4880804
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 4744685
Dr. Nidal As'ad4751622
Dr. Mohammad Sayem4396049
Firas pharmacy5681912
Ferdous pharmacy4783336
Al Asema pharmacy4670555
Nadrouk pharmacy4623672
Al Salam pharmacy4636730
Yacoub pharmacy4634945
Shmeisani pharmacy4637460
Najib pharmacy5347612

IRBID:

Dr. Mohammad Shar7109584
Al Quds pharmacy11
ZARQA:
Dr. Nabil Saffarini401322
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department5941111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4638134
Civil Defence Emergency191
Rescue Price 192 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade4617101
Blood Bank175121
Highway Police5343402
Traffic Police4896391
Public Security Dept.4630321
Hotel Complaints5005800
Price Complaints5601176
Water & Sewerage Complaints465467
Amman Municipality Complaints4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls101230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs4623101
Abdoli Tel. Repairs5661001
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5681001
J. Electricity Authority5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
RJ Flight Information4453201
Queen Alia Int. Airport4453201

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921001
The Islamic Abdi5661317
Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 5894866
Luzmili4630195
Khalidi Maternity4644281/6
Akash Maternity464241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity462362
Mallus, J. Amman4636141
Palestine, Shmeisani5681071
Shmeisani Hospital5681071
University Hospital5353441
Al-Muasher Hospital 5662279
Al-Ahli, Abdali5661646
Jubail, Al-Muasher4771003
Al-Bashir4751102h
Arya, Marka4891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 56220950
Amal Hospital4634155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital109983323
Zarqa National Hospital109980561
Ibn Sina Hospital109986732
Al Ukkma Modern Hospital109980900

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital102275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

02:30Al Dhahran (add) (RJ)
04:30Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)

AQABA:

03:31Haya Hospital (RJ)
03:31Haya Hospital (RJ)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 14453200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:30Muscat (RJ)
10:00Bahrain (RJ)
10:05Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
10:10Sana'a (RJ)
10:15Beirut (RJ)
10:20Bahrain (RJ)
10:40Unai (add) (RJ)
10:45New Delhi (RJ)
11:00Columbo (RJ)
15:55New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:15Kuwait (RJ)
17:30London (RJ)
18:45Kuwait (RJ)
19:10Athens (RJ)
19:15Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:45Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
23:50Paris (add) (RJ)
23:55Larnaca (RJ)
00:30Doha (RJ)
00:40Riyadh (RJ)

Other Flights

08:55Doha (EK)
11:00Kuwait (KU)
13:00Riyadh (SV)
14:10Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:10Sharjah (AH)
15:40Doha (QR)
18:40Beirut (ME)
19:00Paris (AF)
20:25Tel Aviv (LY)
21:00London (BA)
21:10London (BA)
23:20Istanbul (TK)
23:35Larnaca (CY)
00:05Moscow (SU)
01:15Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
04:20Tunis (TU)
05:20Antalia (TK)

Royal Wings (RW)

(For Thursday and Friday)
10:20 Aqaba arriving at QAIA and proceeding to Marka Airport (RW)
18:00 Aqaba arriving at Marka Airport on Thursday and Friday (RW)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)
20:20Tel Aviv (LY)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:00Beirut (RJ)
11:45Kuwait (add) (RJ)
11:50Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)

Other Flights

12:15Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:20Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:45Kuwait (KU)
12:55Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
13:10Paris (RJ)
13:20Athens (RJ)
13:25London (RJ)
18:15Doha (EK)
19:30Riyadh (SV)
20:35Larnaca (RJ)
21:30Madrid (RJ)
21:30Al Dhahran (RJ)
22:00Dubai (EK)
01:30Jeddah (RJ)
01:45Cairo (RJ)
02:30Paris (AF)
02:45Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Royal Wings

(For Thursday and Friday)
08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:45 Tel Aviv (from QAIA — on Thursday only) (RW)
21:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Kohl woos Eastern German voters

BONN (AP) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl reached out Wednesday to voters in economically depressed Eastern Germany, pledging to raise their living standard if he is reelected next month.

Campaigning in Gera in the formerly Communist East, Kohl declared that the region's unemployment was receding because of economic growth and appealed to voters to trust his leadership.

Eastern Germany is key territory for Kohl's campaign as he battles Social Democratic chancellor candidate Gerhard Schröder, the front runner for the Sept. 27 election.

In an interview with the weekly Die Zeit, Kohl said one of his goals for a fifth term is "to make more headway towards equalising living conditions in Germany." He also admitted making a serious mistake at the time of unification that helped kill most of east German industry.

"In 1990, I believed that a large number of west German companies would help east German firms become competitive," he told the newspaper. "But many were only interested in shutting down possible competitors."

Eastern voters flocked to Kohl and his Christian Democrats after German unification eight years ago. But they have increasingly turned their backs because Kohl's 1990 campaign promise to turn the area into "blooming landscapes" has largely failed to come true.

In elections last April in the eastern state of Saxony

Anhalt, support for the Christian Democrats slumped to its lowest since unification.

Kohl, in a speech opening a new government building in Gera, reminded Eastern Germans that his government has extended aid to the area through 2004.

The 68-year-old chancellor also winked at younger, ecologically-minded voters.

He said he would not rule out an alliance between his party and the Greens in the future — though not after the upcoming election — if they tone down their pacifist and environmentalist stands.

Kohl contrasted his portly, homespun image with that

of Schröder, a telegenic pro-business Social

Democrats given to designer suits and cigars. "I am not on the chic side of German politics," he said. "I'm an inelegant type of person."

Schröder revealed more plans for the early days of a Social Democratic government, saying he would link corporate tax cuts to companies' willingness to help find jobs for 100,000 young people.

"We have use crowd tactics if necessary to give young people perspectives for the future again," he was quoted as saying in the weekly Die Woche.

'Kohl may not serve out four-year term'

BONN (AFP) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl may not serve out a full four-year term if reelected in September, the number two in his party Wolfgang Schäuble said.

Kohl "has said that he is setting out for four years but in the end he has also left room for what can happen during these four years," Schäuble said in an interview with the weekly Die Woche to be published Thursday.

Schäuble, whom Kohl has said he would like to see succeed him, said that no one could control questions of succession, "not even as strong a chancellor as Helmut Kohl." There is intense speculation in Germany about what role Schäuble might play after the Sept. 27 vote, be it as a compromise chancellor ruling with opposition leftists if Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) wins convincingly or as the dauphin taking over from Kohl perhaps midway in a new term, in the year 2000.

Schäuble did not provide information on any such speculation in the Die Woche interview.

But Kohl said in an interview with the Die Zeit weekly, also to appear Thursday: "I am candidate for this legislative period (1998-2002). That is all."

Schäuble, the CDU whip in parliament, has been confined to a wheelchair since being shot in assassination attempt in 1990.

Too many foreigners in Germany — poll

HAMBURG, Germany (AP) — Half of Germans said in a poll released Wednesday that there are too many foreigners in Germany, and 10 per cent said they could see themselves voting for a far-right party.

The Forsa poll, conducted for Die Woche newspaper, found far-right sympathy strongest among Germans under 30 at 13 per cent.

The difference between east and west was slight — 10 per cent in Western Germany and 11 per cent in the East.

The poll found 52 per cent of Germans felt there were too many foreigners in Germany; among those supporting the far-right the figure was 84 per cent.

The weekly poll of 1,006 eligible voters gave no margin of error. Campaigning mainly on anti-foreigner slogans, far-right parties have been gaining support, especially in economically struggling Eastern Germany.

The German People's Union won almost 13 per cent of the vote in state elections in Saxony-Anhalt in April.

Its strongest support came from men 18 to 25, one in three of whom voted far-right.

Parliament's outgoing commissioner for foreigners, Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, said immigration policy should not be avoided before Sept. 27 national elections, but politicians should be sensitive as to how they address the issue.

"To take up existing fears and prejudices in an enlightening way is one thing," she said in presenting her final report Wednesday.

"But to promote them as a campaign tactic is something completely different."

Adulterated mustard oil kills 20 in Indian capital

NEW DELHI (AFP) — An Indian court Wednesday banned the sale of mustard oil after a dropsy epidemic caused by contaminated mustard oil killed more than 20 people and hospitalized 500 others in the capital.

The Delhi high court also told the capital's Hindu nationalist administration to take all "legally permitted steps to stop the adulteration of mustard oil at any cost."

The government earlier had told the police to investigate how such large quantities of contaminated oil got onto the market.

The court ordered police to submit a report by Sept. 9 "when the court would review the steps taken by the government to ensure compliance of its order."

"The authorities should strictly adhere to the court's direc-

tions as any negligence on anybody's part would be viewed seriously," the judges said. Newspapers said the disease first came to light early this month in New Delhi, which has a population of around 10 million.

Thousands of patients poured into hospitals with dropsy symptoms.

Dropsy causes swelling of lower limbs, accompanied by breathlessness, nausea, vomiting and upset stomach. If it is not checked, it can lead to glaucoma or death by cardiac arrest.

Tuesday, hundreds of people blocked traffic for four hours on a busy road in New Delhi to protest against the death from dropsy of a mother and her daughter.

The protesters said the illness had been caused by consuming adulterated mustard oil.

Abubakar ends S. African visit assuring of democracy

PRETORIA (AFP) — Nigeria's military ruler General Abdulsalam Abubakar ended a three-day visit to South Africa Wednesday after reassuring his African partners that his country would be a democracy within nine months.

At a press conference hours before he flew out of the capital, Abubakar appealed to the international community for understanding of the problems facing Nigeria.

"I'm calling on the international community to understand the problems of Nigeria and to join hands with us to solve these problems, not only our problems, but the problems of Africa," he said.

He said that he hoped military rule would not return to his country: "Years back, military governments have been sup-

ported due to the cold war."

But now that the cold war was over "... I believe before any military ventures to overthrow a military government, they will think twice. I do hope we have all learnt our lesson."

Abubakar's visit — his first official foreign trip since taking power in June — was crowned with the announcement in his home country of dates early next year for civilian elections, and said he planned to hand over power to an elected government on May 29.

The Nigerian ruler told reporters Tuesday during a visit to Robben Island's prison museum that he would not be a candidate in the Feb. 27 presidential election, saying that it had "never even crossed my mind."

He added Wednesday that he planned to retire

once he had handed power to an elected government.

"I have put down at least 35 years of governance in the military and whether I was going to become the president or not (taking over from deceased General Sani Abacha), I was going to retire quietly to my village, and that is what I intend to do."

Since taking over from Abacha hours after the former ruler's death on June 9, Abubakar has committed himself to ending military rule in his oil-rich country.

He said South Africa's recent transition to democracy was a model for his own country, thinking it for its "brotherly love" during his first state visit as ruler, and its advice on pursuing democracy.

"The South African experience is a miracle in the way they came out of

apartheid to have a free society consisting of various races and colours."

"This gives us hope as Nigerians that despite all our difference we can still live together as a country and work for our common goals," he said.

After addressing parliament Tuesday, Abubakar said Nigeria and South Africa should form a new axis that will become a model for continental cooperation and help realise the dream of an African renaissance.

"We are the torchbearers of this new Africa," he said.

Ties between the two African giants soured during Abacha's dictatorship and reached a dramatic low when South Africa took the lead in urging Nigeria's expulsion from the Commonwealth two years ago.

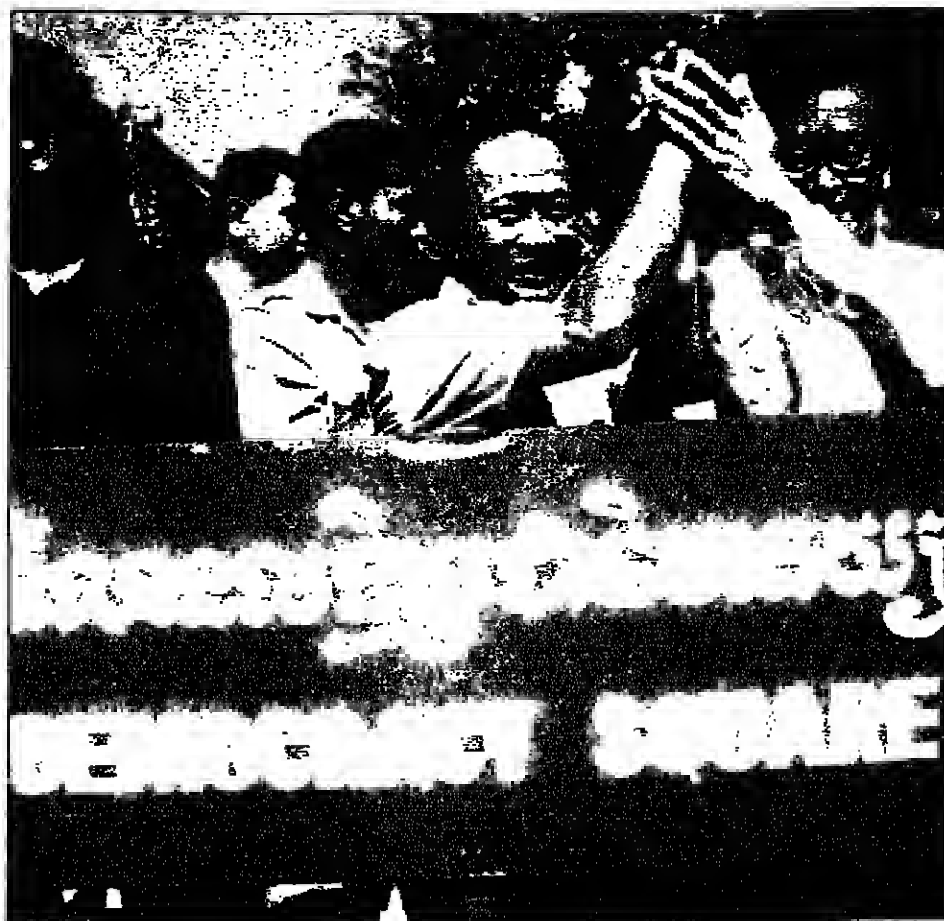
Last month, South

African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki travelled to Lagos to discuss reforms in the country and declared that he was satisfied that Abubakar had created "a window of opportunity" for democracy.

Before flying out from Pretoria for Abuja Wednesday, Abubakar condemned the Tuesday's bombing of a U.S.-style restaurant in Cape Town which killed one and injured 27.

"It is our prayer that the perpetrators of this deadly act be apprehended," Abubakar told a press conference in Pretoria hours before his departure for Nigeria.

"The world is tired of all these atrocities, and I appeal to all those perpetrators to take the line of peace and reconciliation, (rather) than through violence," he said.



Cambodian opposition leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh and politician Sam Rainsy (second right) join hands after unveiling a sign during a demonstration in Phnom Penh. Confrontation loomed in Phnom Penh Wednesday as the government declared the opposition sit-down protest outside parliament illegal and ordered it to move. Opposition leaders who began the round-the-clock protest Monday to press their demands that their allegations of fraud in last month's election are properly investigated, said they were considering the order to shift their rally to a sports stadium (Reuters photo)

Cambodian protesters dig in, government orders demo to move

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian opposition protesters dug in at a tent city near parliament Wednesday defying government orders to move on the third day of a demonstration against strongman Hun Sen and urging new elections.

King Norodom Sihanouk, viewed as one of the few people capable of mediating the crisis, said he could not and would not intervene unless specifically asked.

Several thousand protesters unveiled a plaque dubbing the park — home to the growing tent city — "Democracy Square" a change from the original name "Democracy Place."

In a joint statement, the royalist FUNCINPEC party of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh and the self-named party of dissident Sam Rainsy, said they would stand firm.

"The people will not move from Democracy Square. It is a public place. It is the site of the national assembly, that is meant to represent the people's will and it is a place where the people have left their blood in the struggle for freedom," the statement said.

It referred to a bloody grenade attack last March 31 on a Sam Rainsy-led anti-government rally in the same place that killed at least 16 people.

Although pronouncing the sit-in illegal and demanding the removal of the demonstrators, the interior ministry met with Sam Rainsy and FUNCINPEC representatives to try to reach a compromise.

After the meeting, Sam Rainsy said the opposition would submit a new application in municipal officials to hold a sit-in protest at the

assembly. "They are expecting our application, but they are non-committal," he told reporters, referring to the possible answer the authorities might give.

It was not clear exactly when the application would be submitted or when the Phnom Penh municipality might make its decision.

In its statement, the opposition said it would agree to remove blockades and tents which have sprung up on the streets and sidewalks and move them further into the park to clear any obstruction.

They would also provide toilets, clean up and ensure security.

A spokesman for Sam Rainsy's party said later the dissident would unilaterally organise the removal of all tents and blockades from the streets and sidewalks Wednesday night.

"The Cambodian people want real democracy to be installed," Prince Ranariddh told reporters during a morning visit to the park. "They definitely reject a totalitarian regime."

The opposition is demanding that its allegations of widespread vote fraud and irregularities in the July 26 election be investigated seriously. Failing that, it is demanding new elections. It contends that Hun Sen's de facto ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) stole the election through fraud.

According to official preliminary returns, the CPP stands to win a majority in parliament but not enough to form a government on its own.

Sam Rainsy's party and FUNCINPEC, which stand to win the remaining seats, have

refused offers to join a coalition with the CPP until their complaints are addressed. Those complaints have been rejected en masse by election officials as baseless and only a fraction have been accepted to be heard on appeal. But the international community, which paid for most of the election, has already given its stamp of approval, terming the vote "free and fair."

Despite that, Prince Ranariddh gave the impression that only a new election could solve the problem. "The (election) authorities have already rejected (our complaints) we do not have any possibility other than to have a new election," he said, adding however that if the complaints were addressed, there was still a chance for a coalition as long as it did not include Hun Sen.

"We will not accept Hun Sen as prime minister," the prince said.

Several senior foreign officials have suggested King Sihanouk should attempt to end the impasse which threatens to turn into a constitutional crisis when the current parliament's mandate expires next month.

But in an interview with his staff released by the palace Wednesday, the king said he could not do so without requests from the three main players.

"In Cambodia at the moment, an action or initiative from (one) is only conceivable and possible if Hun Sen, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy together ask me to enter the action to try to achieve this or that, with their agreement, in the high interest of our nation," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Iris identification system for home computer users'

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Oki Electric Industry Co. Ltd. said Wednesday it would develop an inexpensive system to verify personal computer users by the iris of their eyes. The firm has already developed a small mouse-like prototype which has a tiny camera inside, an Oki official said. It can be easily hooked up to a computer without any peripheral device. "We plan to market the device for personal computer users by March 2000 at a price of about 50,000 yen (\$350) each," the official said. The system verifies a person's iris, the contractile, circular diaphragm forming the coloured portion of the eye. The iris is unique to each person and makes identification more accurate than fingerprints. Oki will put on sale an iris verification system for corporate users in October and it can identify a person "with 99.99 per cent accuracy," the official said.

Computers to study Chaucer six centuries on

LONDON (R) — Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales may have influenced European literature for centuries, but scholars have been arguing for nearly as long about what Chaucer's exact words were. But now biochemists at Cambridge University are using computer programmes to analyse different versions of Chaucer's bawdy tales to reconstruct the text from the original 14th century manuscript, which has not survived. A report published in the scientific journal Nature Wednesday said programmes normally used for genetic research had been adapted to analyse various manuscripts of one of the seminal works of English literature. Chaucer's original text has been lost and later manuscripts often vary considerably, leading scholars to argue over which versions were copied from the original and which are most accurate. "The sheer quantity of information in... 'The Canterbury Tales' defeats any system of manual analysis," said the report by Christopher Howe. Using the principles of genetics, the computer compares different versions of the text, analysing small changes made when books were copied by hand before the advent of printing. Previously, such research had to be done manually, involving hours of painstaking work even for short texts. The 58 surviving 15th century manuscripts of "The Wife of Bath's" Prologue were fed into the computer, which identified several manuscripts, previously ignored by scholars, as being very close to the original. "In time, this may lead editors to produce a radically different text of 'The Canterbury Tales'," the report said.

China's Yunnan aims to become dope-free zone

BEIJING (AFP) — The southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan, whose laid-back reputation attracts thousands of batik-clad backpackers every year, has announced plans to become "marijuana free" by the end of the century. "With some 2,000 hectares of marijuana, Yunnan ranks first in the country as a grower of the weed," Xinhua news agency reported Wednesday. Yunnan, which borders the infamous Golden Triangle poppy-growing region spanning northern Thailand, Burma and Laos, will spend nine million yuan (\$1.1 million) between now and 2000 on helping local farmers turn to other crops. It hoped to wipe out marijuana from the province by the end of the century, Xinhua said. Marijuana products have long been freely available in relaxed Yunnan tourist resorts like Dali and Lijiang.

Bulgaria's Boris III not victim of poison plot

SOFIA (AFP) — Claims that Bulgarian King Boris III was poisoned to death in 1943 just after he returned from meeting Hitler have been given the lie by a autopsy report published for the first time Wednesday. Thanks to the forethought of Boris' gravediggers, who removed the dead king's heart and preserved it in formaldehyde, experts were able to establish that he died in fact of a heart attack, aged just 25, reported the 24 Tchassan newspaper. The flask containing the heart was found by archaeologists in 1991 in the garden of the royal residence Vrana, outside Sofia. Tests carried out on the heart two years later by, among others, the professors Ivan Moskov and Stoitcho Radanov proved he died from a heart attack, said the newspaper. According to persistent rumours, the highly popular young king was poisoned after he refused to send Bulgarian troops to fight for Germany against Russia during the World War II. Although an ally of Hitler, Bulgaria wanted to refrain from attacking Russia out of gratitude for Russian help in freeing it from the clutches of the Ottoman empire in 1878. Boris III was buried in the church of the monastery in Rila, in southwest Bulgaria. Communist authorities destroyed his tomb in 1946 and the body was moved to a chapel in Vrana, although the residence itself was also razed by the Communists in 1956.

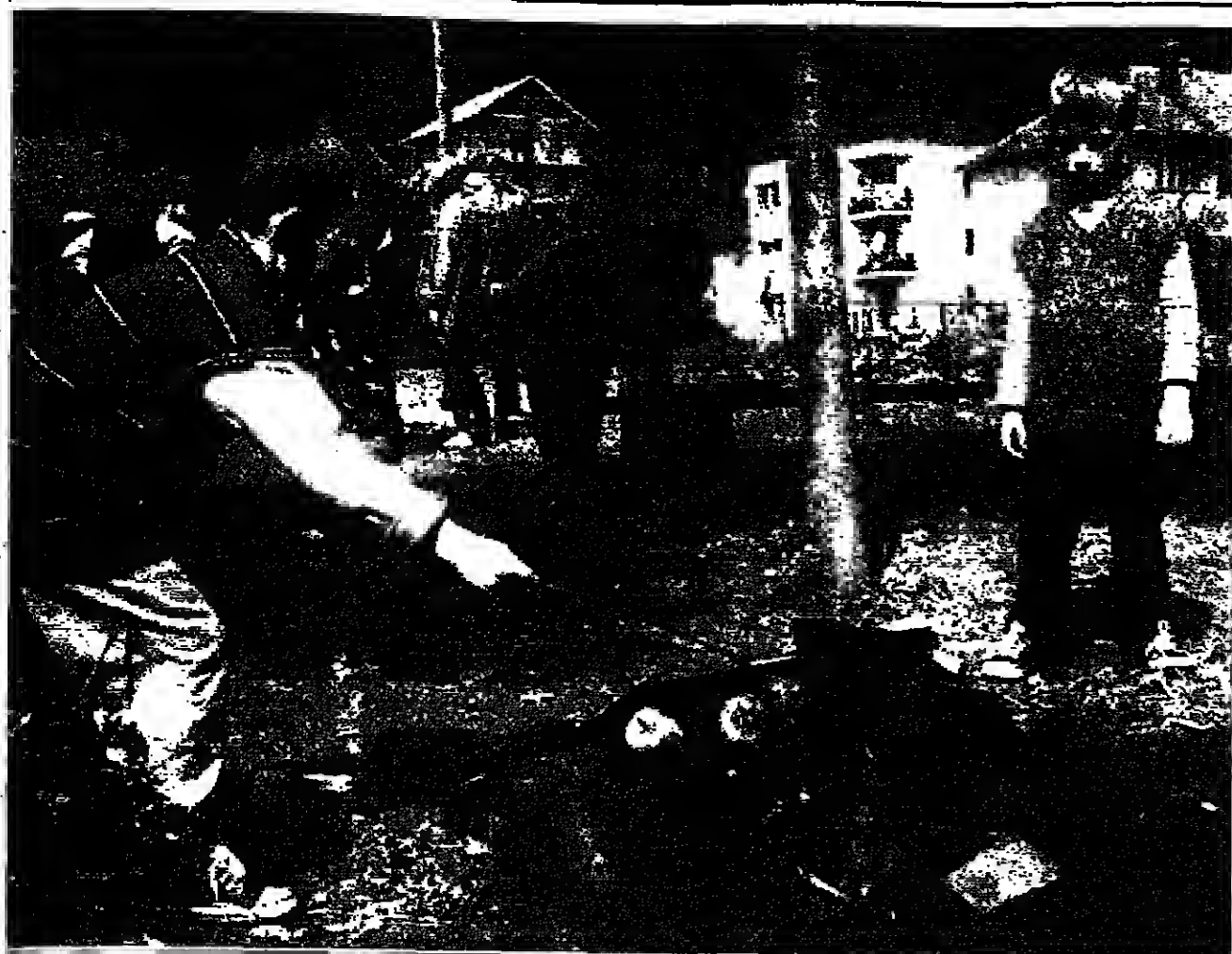
Papal surgeon loses fight against cancer

ROME (AFP) — Papal surgeon Francesco Crucitti died at the age of 67 Wednesday from cancer, hospital sources in Rome said. Crucitti had operated on Pope John Paul II on three occasions: after the 1981 attempt on his life, in 1992 to remove a tumour from his colon and in 1996 for appendicitis. The surgeon was director of the surgical institute at Rome's Catholic university. Born in 1930 in the southern region of Reggio Calabria, he became a doctor at the age of 22 and practised surgery in Rome since 1967.

1,000-year-old Polish oak fitted with lightning conductor

WARSAW (AFP) — A 1,000-year-old oak tree in central Poland has become the first tree in Europe to be fitted with a lightning conductor, the daily Gazeta Wyborca reported Wednesday. The huge tree, between eight and 12 centuries old and known affectionately as "Bartek" (the diminutive of Bartholemew), has been venerated by Poles for generations and is considered an historic monument. In 1991 it was struck by lightning which caused limited damage. Last year German experts from a "tree clinic" in Stuttgart examined the tree and decided it could live for several centuries more as long as it had some support for its branches and was fitted with a lightning conductor. The device was fitted virtually for free by a Polish firm which saw it as a good publicity stunt.

World
Kosovo
guerrilla
Mother



Ethnic Albanian boys from the Serbian province of Kosovo prepare food on their improvised stove in the transition collective centre in the central Bosnian town of Srednje, some 20 km from the capital Sarajevo. A fresh wave of Albanian refugees have crossed into Bosnia since the fighting in the province of Kosovo erupted. According to unofficial records there are currently some 9,500 Kosovar refugees in Bosnia (Reuters photo)

'Kosovo homeless obstacle to peace'

PRISTINA, Serbia (R) — Western diplomats pressing to end bloodshed in Kosovo said Wednesday that the plight of thousands of people displaced by the fighting hurt prospects for peace talks.

"We still believe strongly that there is no military solution and we want to see the negotiating process start as soon as possible," Peter Ricketts, deputy political director of the British Foreign Office, said after meeting Ibrahim Rugova, the main ethnic Albanian political leader in Pristina.

Serbian troops are battling to put down a secessionist uprising in Kosovo, a Serbian province where ethnic Albanians make up 90 per cent of the population.

U.S. envoy Chris Hill, who is ambassador to neighbouring Macedonia and has been shuttling between the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Serbian leaders in Belgrade, was also in Pristina as part of his continuing efforts to get peace talks going.

But Ricketts and Gerhard Jandl, Austrian chairman of the European Union's main working group for the Balkans, told reporters after meeting Rugova that the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, where some 200,000 people have been displaced, is a serious obstacle to resuming talks.

Relief agencies estimate that 10 per cent of the population have had to flee their homes and farms, with perhaps a quarter living outdoors, after Serbian police and troops attacked their villages.

"The first priority of both European Union countries and President Rugova is certainly to alleviate the plight of the suffering population and to get displaced persons back to their villages and towns," Jandl said.

"Unless the solution to the humanitarian situation is achieved we don't see any chance to a real progress on the political front."

"Under current circumstances the prospects for political negotiations are very, very low," he added.

Fighting died down two weeks ago after heavily armed Serb police and troops pushed rebels of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) out of one of their last redoubts at Junik, close to the Albanian border.

But the Serb offensive picked up again this past weekend, with police and army attacks on villages west and southwest of Pristina sending hundreds more civilians fleeing.

Rugova, who suspended talks in June in the face of a Serb military buildup, agreed to restart them after Junik fell on condition that the fighting cease. Ethnic Albanian sources said the continued fighting has all but eliminated any chance of talks starting soon.

"It would be very tough now after the heavy fighting which has left many people dead and wounded," an ethnic Albanian source close to the peace negotiating team told Reuters.

Sporadic fighting was reported overnight Tuesday and early Wednesday, but of far lower intensity than in recent days.

Serb sources said police near Djakovica in the west and Suva Reka in the southwest came under attack from suspected KLA guerrillas.

The sources said one policeman was seriously wounded at a police outpost in Dulje on the Pristina-Prizren road on Tuesday, but his life was not in danger.

As the diplomatic efforts continued, political and military leaders of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority showed signs of wanting to cooperate more closely.

In separate newspaper articles, Naim Maloku, a high-ranking officer of the rebel KLA, and Bujar Bukoshi, head of a self-styled government in exile in Bonn, spoke of the need to improve coordination between the armed separatist movement and the political wing.

Kosovo rebels to continue with guerrilla struggle — Demaci

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) will push ahead with its rebellion against Belgrade until it has won independence for the Kosovo Albanian people, a top KLA official told AFP.

"The KLA is once again starting its guerrilla struggle, the resistance continues," KLA political representative Adam Demaci said.

"But it will be more difficult for Serbia now, because the KLA has around 30,000 (Albanian) people under arms, and when all these people spread around Kosovo, the Serbs will not know where they are," Demaci said.

Belgrade government troops have since February been fighting rebels of the KLA who, after being pushed back in a four-month long Serb offensive, appear to be regrouping in several areas of the southern Serbian province which has a 90 per cent Albanian majority population.

After the July offensive, Serb forces faced guerrillas "everywhere," Demaci said.

"Wherever you look, there is shooting, killings ... but there is no other way when one side (KLA) has no adequate means to confront the heavy armament" of the Belgrade troops, Demaci said.

Clashes between Belgrade government forces and the KLA intensified last weekend in several regions of the restive province.

More than 600 people, mostly Albanians, have been killed, while tens of thousands have fled their homes since the start of clashes.

Demaci was the first Kosovo Albanian leader to acknowledge the existence of the KLA rebels, and on August 14, agreed to accept their offer to be the main KLA representative.

"I am the KLA's political officer, and I am here to enable a political solution if anyone wants it. It is impos-

sible (for the KLA) to accept a one-sided cease fire, when the other side continues with its attacks," Demaci said.

And the only acceptable political solution for Demaci and his KLA rebels is full independence for Kosovo.

"The basis must be Kosovo as an independent and sovereign subject, and after that, we can see, with respect of the people's will, what can be done on the issue of cooperation," Demaci added.

Demaci, 62, is seen by many as the main rival of Ibrahim Rugova, the moderate leader of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority. He is known as the "Kosovo Mandela" because he too spent 28 years behind bars for his political opinions.

However, Demaci, as well as the KLA, supports the idea of armed resistance to reach a political goal — an independent Kosovo.

"We have tried autonomy and it was violated by the Serbian regime. That is how

we have reached the phase where we are now — when we have nothing, but we have the will for freedom," Demaci said.

Demaci criticised Rugova for a lack of decisive political aims.

"Rugova says that he is president, but he has no state. If there is a president, there should be a state, an army, police."

"I do not want to play politics. We do not have a state, we do not have institutions, we have nothing concrete, but this KLA is fighting for this people, and I think we will be able to force the Serbian regime to understand that it is not possible to continue like this," Demaci said.

If the world powers manage to broker an agreement between Belgrade and the Kosovo Albanians which falls short of "the will of the people — independence — the KLA, myself and many others, will not accept it," Demaci said.

The Missionaries of Charity also opened an orphanage for handicapped children to commemorate Mother Teresa's birthday. Named "Dayadan" (Gift of Kindness), it can house 150.

"We are starting with about 20 children but it will expand," a spokeswoman said.

The Missionaries of Charity now comprises nearly 2,500 nuns around the world, backed up by 400 brothers and thousands of lay volunteers. They run 380 hospices, leper colonies, orphanages and homes for AIDS sufferers worldwide.

Rebels launch battle for Kinshasa

KINSHASA (R) — Rwandan-backed rebels fighting to topple President Laurent Kabila launched an assault on the capital Kinshasa Wednesday, infiltrating suburbs near the airport and triggering a fierce artillery battle.

With the sound of heavy weapons fire echoing across the city from early morning from the battle front in the north east, the government urged the people via state radio and television to stay calm.

"The Congolese armed forces are conducting mop-up operations of armed elements who infiltrated the capital," a radio announcer said.

Sporadic bursts of automatic weapons fire could be heard closer to the city centre, witnesses said.

Diplomats reported a heavy military deployment near Kabila's residence, the Marble Palace, in the south west of the city, with numerous road blocks and security checks.

Kabila, who accuses former allies Rwanda and Uganda of invading in support of rebels who took up arms against him on Aug. 2, returned to the city Tuesday after spending just over a week in his southern home province of Katanga.

Information Minister Didier Mumengi played down the infiltration, telling state radio that enemy soldiers cut off from

their rear base by Kabila's Angolan allies had taken refuge in the forest of Mikonga north east of the city.

"The time has come to end, once and for all, the final convulsions of the invaders," he said.

Mumengi appealed on state radio and television for young people to form self-defence groups across the city of five million people in association with communal authorities.

"Dear compatriots, the government of public salvation invites you to remain calm. The Congolese armed forces, having decided to finish with the enemy once and for all, have things under control," he added.

Residents in the suburb of Masina, in the north east of the city, told Reuters that rebels had entered the area, telling everyone to stay at home. Witnesses said three government soldiers had been killed in the area.

Congolese and Zimbabwian forces had earlier blocked a rebel advance on the road approaching the city from the south west.

Rebel commanders told Reuters Wednesday they had found another way of approaching the city.

Angola has sent troops, tanks and planes into the strategic western River Congo corridor linking the capital to the sea.

They seized the rebel rear

base in the garrison town of Kitona at the weekend and were advancing on the rebels from the rear.

"It's a desperate act but apparently well coordinated," one Western diplomat said of Wednesday's rebel operation.

Residents of Binza on the approaches to Kabila's residence reported that it was calm there but security was intense.

The radio said that the fighting started some time after dawn following the arrest of three infiltrators who denounced the presence of fellow rebels in the forest.

The sound of heavy artillery fire rang out around 8 a.m. (0700 GMT). It continued four hours later.

An early morning haze covered the city so it was unclear whether Kabila loyalists were using air strikes against the rebels as they had elsewhere on the western front. Witnesses reported at least one helicopter gunship flying over the city.

The government said after a cabinet meeting Tuesday that Congolese forces and their allies had recaptured at string of towns in the west, including the main river port of Matadi.

"Today we can state with joy that the far west of our country has come back into the republic," Mumengi said. "Matadi, Kitona, Muanda, Boma and Banana

have been retaken." The recapture of Kitona, the oil town of Muanda, the smaller port of Boma and the naval base of Banana following the massive intervention of Angolan troops on the side of the government had already been reported. There was no independent confirmation that Matadi had been retaken.

With the rebels holding the giant Inga Dam in the west, Kinshasa awoke Wednesday after a night without electricity. In past days, power supplies returned later.

State radio broke into its programmes to offer its explanation of the explosions. It then continued with its usual daily fare of light music, sports and other reports.

State Television screened Disney's "Jungle Book" as part of its usual morning children's programmes.

Kabila ousted veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko with the help of Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated army. Uganda, Angola and a broad coalition grouping opposition figures in the former Zaire and other foreign allies in May 1997.

The rebels fighting Kabila hold Bunia, Goma, Bukavu and Uvira, the main towns in the east, and say that they control Congo's third city of Kisangani in the jungle interior.

U.S.-Pakistan nuke talks positive, back IMF accord

ISLAMABAD (R) — Talks between U.S. and Pakistani officials in London to head off a nuclear arms race in South Asia were positive and also lent backing to an early international financing package for Pakistan, a joint statement made available here Wednesday said.

It said the meeting between U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shamsah Ahmad had been "serious, substantive and constructive".

The statement, issued in London, said both sides called for an early resumption of Pakistan-India talks and the United States also expressed support for a swift International Monetary Fund (IMF) accord to ease Pakistan's economic difficulties.

The statement said

"recent developments were discussed" without directly mentioning the uproar caused in Pakistan by last week's U.S. missile attacks on suspected terrorist camps in Afghanistan and an alleged chemical weapons factory in Sudan.

Pakistan earlier this week lodged a formal protest to the United Nations Security Council saying the U.S. had violated its airspace for the attacks on militants in Afghanistan.

One of the missiles crashed into southern Pakistan without exploding and bomb disposal experts plan to destroy it.

Pakistan also called the U.S. strikes on its fellow Muslim countries violations of their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The statement said the U.S. and its regional ally Pakistan had developed a

better understanding in the talks, which covered regional security, arms control, non-proliferation measures and the situation in the region.

"Both sides expressed their respective viewpoints and developed better mutual understanding," the statement said.

It said the U.S. also expressed support for an early agreement between Pakistan, IMF and members of the Paris Club, grouping major sovereign lenders.

Pakistan is seeking a \$3 billion financing package to avert a balance of payments crisis and a default on its \$30 billion debt.

The United States imposed economic sanctions on Pakistan and India after they conducted nuclear tests in May. The move tipped Pakistan's

fragile economy into crisis as foreign capital inflows to the country dried up.

"Both sides attached importance to continued strong bilateral ties in the interest of peace and security in the region and desire for a broad and constructive relationship with each other," the statement said.

It said Kashmir, the Himalayan region disputed by India and Pakistan, was discussed and both the U.S. and Pakistan were agreed there should be an early resumption of Indo-Pakistan talks.

Pakistan has said it supports non-proliferation of nuclear weapons but is unwilling to sign any international agreements until the causes of tensions in South Asia are addressed. It regards Jammu and Kashmir as the root cause of tensions with India.

More than 530,000 evacuated as Bonnie closes in

NAGS HEAD, North Carolina (AP) — More than a half-million tourists and residents were ordered to leave Carolina's coastal islands as Hurricane Bonnie closed in with gathering speed.

Hurricane-force winds could hit the coast by daybreak Wednesday. By late Tuesday, showers and tropical storm-force winds of at least 63 kilometres per hour were falling in southeastern North Carolina.

By early Tuesday afternoon, traffic was bumper-to-bumper on roads leading inland from North Carolina's Outer Banks as people tried to get out of the way of Bonnie, a behemoth of a storm with winds of 184 kph.

Many residents were unwilling to take the chance that the first hurricane of the Atlantic season would follow the path of some previous storms and take a last-minute turn out to sea.

Monday, Bonnie's path was so slow and wobbly forecasters were unsure when or even if it might hit land. But by early Wednesday, the storm was centred about 322 kilometres south of Cape Lookout and was pushing

towards the northwest at 23 kph.

Early Wednesday, the National Weather Service extended hurricane warnings farther south, so they stretched from Chincoteague, Virginia, to Edisto Beach, South Carolina.

Swimming was banned at beaches as far north as New York's Long Island as Bonnie kicked up dangerously rough surf along the East Coast. Four New Jersey lifeguards had to be rescued Tuesday after being overpowered by big surf in Point Pleasant Beach.

More than 330,000 people were ordered off North Carolina's coastal islands. About 200,000 more, including 120,000 tourists, were instructed to leave South Carolina's two northernmost coastal counties.

Shelters opened Tuesday for thousands of displaced residents and tourists in 23 eastern North Carolina counties and in South Carolina and Virginia.

Farther out in the Atlantic, Hurricane Danielle moved towards the U.S. Virgin Islands with 128 kph winds, and forecasters expect the storm to be as strong as Bonnie within days.

Bhutto has assets unfrozen, accuses PM

LAHORE, Pakistan (R) — A Pakistani court Wednesday unfroze ex-prime minister Benazir Bhutto's declared assets as the opposition leader brought more charges of corruption against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

An Ehtesab (accountability) bench of the Punjab province's Lahore High Court passed the orders on an application by Bhuno in which she had said she was facing financial constraints due to the freezing of her assets in and outside Pakistan by another bench of the court on April 27 on a government request.

But the two-judge court directed Bhutto not to transfer or sell her movable and immovable assets without its permission until a final decision of the case.

In Islamabad, Bhuno told a news conference she had submitted a new complaint with an accountability commissioner accusing Sharif of corruption and tax evasion.

Bhutto, who has already sent tit-for-tat corruption complaints against Sharif, said she had accused the prime minister of tax evasion, corruption and wrongful dismissal of a government official who had conducted an inquiry against him in 1996.

"We went to the Chief Ehtesab (accountability) Commissioner and asked him to exercise his inherent powers for this reference to be sent to an Ehtesab court," Bhuno said.

She said she sought disqualification of Sharif as a member of the National Assembly (lower house) based on the complaint because there was "enough documentary evidence against him".

Bhutto herself has been accused of corruption in Pakistan by the government, and a Swiss judge wants her to be indicted for money laundering.

Bhutto denies all the charges and says she is ready to be held accountable.

"People want accountability and I am offering myself for accountability under ordinary courts," she said.

"But accountability should start from 1977 and cover all the years after that." She said she wanted across-the-board accountability of all governments since 1977, when her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was ousted as prime minister in an army coup. He was hanged in 1979 after a controversial conviction for conspiring in the murder of a political opponent.

Benazir Bhutto has twice been prime minister of predominantly Muslim Pakistan. She was last sacked in November 1996 on disputed charges of corruption, which she denies.

'Mother Teresa with us after death'

CALCUTTA (AFP) — Some 300 nuns of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity order Wednesday celebrated the 88th anniversary of her birth, saying the Nobel laureate who died almost a year ago was constantly in their midst.

A spokeswoman said the birthday was marked in the usual manner with a special Mass at the order's headquarters and hymns and songs by children in the order's orphanages in the city.

"The only exceptional thing was that a lot of people were praying at Mother's grave today, including in the traditional Indian style," she said.

Mother Teresa earned the title "Saint of the Gutter" for her lifelong service to the poor, the sick and the dying. She died in Calcutta, her adopted home for several decades, on Sept. 5 last year.

The Albanian-born nun is buried in a ground floor room at the mission headquarters in downtown Calcutta. The building is near a teeming slum where Mother Teresa began her social work when she set up the order in 1950.

Her successor Sister Nirmala told AFP that Mother Teresa was omnipresent even after her death.

"I feel it and the nuns feel it," she said. "She is with us. She guides us. We feel it during prayer and at other times. She has not left us."

Addressing the Mass early in the morning, she said: "On this sacred day, we rededicate ourselves to the services of the poorest of the poor and towards the path shown to us by the sacred Mother."

"We will not forget her immense contribution to the cause of the depressed and the downtrodden as well as her promotion of universal brotherhood and world peace," she said. "Let peace prevail all over the world to pay the fittest tribute to Mother."

The Missionaries of Charity also opened an orphanage for handicapped children to commemorate Mother Teresa's birthday. Named "Dayadan" (Gift of Kindness), it can house 150.

"We are starting with about 20 children but it will expand," a spokeswoman said.

The Missionaries of Charity now comprises nearly 2,500 nuns around the world, backed up by 400 brothers and thousands of lay volunteers. They run 380 hospices, leper colonies, orphanages and homes for AIDS sufferers worldwide.

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Jordan Times

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A deal's a deal

THERE ARE conflicting reports that the Palestinians and Israelis are about to reach an agreement on an Israeli redeployment from an additional 13 per cent of the occupied Palestinian territories. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on the one hand, had been reported to be on the verge of agreeing to the withdrawal, although on condition that three per cent of the area evacuated be declared a nature reserve and kept under Israeli control. Ministers and Knesset members in his coalition have also reported that the prime minister has dropped an earlier condition that the Palestinian National Council meet to drop articles in the Palestinian Charter that call for the liberation of the whole of Palestine.

But now Netanyahu is saying the statement of his coalition members was incorrect.

This explains why chief U.S. negotiator Dennis Ross declined Israel's invitation to visit the region after he attended, with Chairman Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres, the ceremony commemorating the fifth anniversary of the Oslo agreement which was held in the Norwegian capital this week.

Netanyahu absented himself from the ceremony to avoid meeting with Arafat or being morally compelled to show a gesture of reconciliation to Palestinians.

Now that Arafat has kept his side of the bargain by reining in Hamas and ensuring no attacks against Israel for the past 11 months, it seems that Netanyahu has run out of tricks and excuses.

For their part, the Palestinians have rejected Netanyahu's proposal and declared that the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations are all but dead. Nabil Abu Rudeina, an aide to Arafat, called on the Americans to push the Israelis.

The Palestinians have done more than enough on their part to advance the peace process. It is now high time that Israel stick to its end of the bargain and move ahead with the second redeployment.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek discussed Jordan's fiscal policy, and focused on spending priorities between defence, health and education for the 1999 budget. He encouraged the government not to take the easy way out by adopting last year's budget with only a few meagre amendments, but to assemble a completely new budget, based on detailed research on the Kingdom's current situation and needs as well as taking into consideration international trends and developments. Fanek said he does not want Jordan to compare itself only on a regional scale, but to become competitive with the industrialised countries of the West. "They set the example we should follow," argued the writer. In a regional perspective, with comparatively high spending on education, and health and far less expenditure on defence, Jordan is doing extremely well, he said. However, compared to industrialised countries, albeit running on a prudent defence budget, Jordan is spending far too little on education and health, the writer said. He suggested raising the stake of the private sector in the fields of health and education by, for example, charging people with high incomes for services such as medical treatment and school fees, or encouraging the establishment of private hospitals and private schools.

Al Dustour's Rakan Majali reviewed the current developments in the region and its effect on the peace process. He said the United States, with Israel behind it, is trying to create a string of crises in the region to impede the peace march. Majali said the United States was never reluctant to tarnish Iraq's reputation in the world community by making the latter seem disobedient to world legitimacy represented by the United Nations' resolutions. Then Israel brings its dubious withdrawal offer from Lebanon which had to be accompanied by security pledges by Lebanon to prevent attacks on north Israel, said Majali. Then comes Clinton-Lewinsky fiasco, the writer said. Finally, Majali said, there were the bombings in Sudan and Afghanistan. The writer said all these incidents were more than enough to divert world attention from the peace process between Israel and the Arab states. He said he suspects these incidents were concocted and did not exclude Israel from the matter.

View from Academia

An 'ounce of humility' goes a long way

Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

IF I WERE to offer advice to the new cabinet — why not, everyone these days is volunteering advice regarding how the government should go about conducting its business? — I would say one thing, and one thing only: Be humble. Humble in your aspirations, humble in your goals, humble in setting up your priorities and humble in your conception of what you can actually accomplish. Let us not promise more than we can actually deliver.

The problems are numerous, and the challenges are immense. Many of them are, in fact, quite pressing and urgent, having piled up over so many years without much action or having erupted as a result of certain natural or peculiar developments. There are problems in all spheres: political, economic, social, educational and ecological. You name it.

There is the present economic recession, value of the dinar, unemployment, poverty, the poor quality of life in so many cities, towns and neighbourhoods, the poor quality of services, inefficiency, mediocrity, corruption, nepotism. There are problems related to investment, tax laws, privatisation, normalisation, the stalled peace process, Arab-Arab relations, transfer of technology, availability of funds and resources. There is water shortage, traffic accidents, cleanliness of the environment, standard of living, etc.

In addition to these problems (and many others), there are two challenges for the government in particular and our culture in general to deal with. For our culture, these two challenges are long-term; for the government, they are urgent and immediate.

The first has to do with our society's obsession with problems. We love to talk about problems, many of which we like to call scandals. Sociologically, one may argue that not long ago, the problem with individuals in

our society was their lack of awareness of problems, and their indifference to them. Nowadays, the problem is that individuals are too aware and too interested and concerned (even though until this day and age many do not see themselves as part and parcel of problem creating or problem solving).

Everyone speaks of problems these days. There are, in fact, as many problems as there are individuals in our society. Read our newspapers. What do you find? Two things: advertisements and problems. Talk to our taxi drivers. What do they talk about? Problems. Talk to the car mechanics, gas station attendants, janitors, butchers, bakers, carpenters, engineers, doctors, businessmen, preachers, teachers, students, politicians, etc. What do you hear? Problems. Each and every person in our society is a philosopher and an expert in diagnosing problems. Each is a minister or a prime minister.

The second has to do with our citizens' high expectations. We aim high in this part of the world and expect greatly. We are a nation of big ideals, big hopes, big dreams. The problem here lies not so much in this, of course, but in our assumption that such ideals, hopes and dreams can be translated into a reality overnight. Individuals in our society assume a lot and simplify a lot. As a result of the anecdotes, legends, and miracles we have been fed by grandmothers, teachers, preachers, historians, poets, parliamentarians and politicians (we do not listen much to scientists and scholars), we have become guilty of romanticism, idealism and simplification.

One may argue, of course, and correctly so, that individuals in our society are at once romantic and realistic (in the literary sense of these two terms), optimistic and pessimistic, and believers and sceptics. There are in the

Arab psyche of today two levels, and the two are diametrically opposed: the level of wishful thinking and the level of stark, disappointing realism. The two exist simultaneously.

This same duality is reflected in peoples' conception of government. They at once believe in it and disbelieve. They at once expect it to do everything all at once and do nothing. Such duality has been partly nurtured and fostered by the conduct of some previous governments which promised everything and delivered nothing, or very little.

The main challenge for the present government is how it is going to tackle this mountain of problems and maintain expectations. The challenge is how the government is going to wean people from so many expectations but without letting them down. The challenge is how the government is going to deliver not words and promises but acts, deeds and effective solutions.

The trick lies, in my humble opinion, in being humble and realistic. Instead of trying to solve 20 problems at once, let's solve 3 or 4. At the end of the day, facts and figures triumph over myths, legends and sweet poetry. Our citizens are (and this is another interesting paradox about the Arab psyche), beyond their stark romanticism and their stark realism, quite reasonable and down to earth.

His Majesty King Hussein has made the life of the new cabinet easier by specifying for it the country's priorities at this critical moment in time. HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, is lending all of his support. In many ways, it is a blessed, privileged cabinet. What remains is for the cabinet itself to sit down and draw a humble but precise and concrete list of the things that it wants to do — that it can do.



Privatise and/or be damned?

By Riad al Khouri

WILL THE advent of the new Jordanian government make any difference to the economy? The firm answer is "maybe." Admission of how bad things are is a good start for the incoming cabinet, but is anything significant actually going to be done about the economic situation? The response again has to be a resounding "maybe." At least that's what many optimists like me are saying.

Anyway, whatever steps the government takes to deal with the economy, accelerating privatisation must be a leading priority. Privatisation is a fact of life in countries as diverse as Australia, Brazil, China, Malaysia, Pakistan, and New Zealand, among many others. Jordan cannot and should not be an exception; not that we're copycats who go in for blind imitation of other economies, but because our public sector must be scaled down to give private business room to produce more efficiently.

Spurred on by the conditionalities of the IMF, the World Bank, the EU, USAID, etc., some specific programmes for the implementation of privatisation in Jordan have been formulated (in land transport for example), and a certain amount of divestiture has also occurred (most notably in tourism).

This is good, as far as it goes, but more is needed, and the fragility of the economy tends to indicate that privatisation cannot be car-

ried out overnight.

On the other hand, this should not be an excuse for lack of activity by the government, since economic weakness interacts with lack of reform in a vicious circle.

A reason for the relatively slow pace of Jordanian privatisation may be the possible impact on employment. Unemployment has plagued Jordan since the early 1990s. With other problems to deal with, the exacerbation of unemployment is something that successive Jordanian governments have been trying diligently to avoid. Nobody seems to know how much unemployment there are in Jordan, but the percentage is well into double digits, way up from the mid-90s when it was at a "mere" 14 percent. Reports this week of underemployment among doctors underline the point of the weakness of the job market in Jordan: when physicians have trouble working, then you know there is something seriously wrong.

So in the case of Jordan, what will be the impact of privatisation on unemployment in both the short- and long-run? The examples of the done divestiture deals in tourism and the advanced stages of privatisation in land transport seem to give a positive answer. The biggest divestiture in tourism, the acquisition by private business of the state share of the owning company of the InterContinental Hotel, has proven to be a success from the employ-

ment point of view. The labour force of the hotel has jumped since its sale by the government, and "indirect" employment by the hotel for expansion and other activities has skyrocketed. As for the Public Transport Corporation (PTC), owner of those polluting wheels playing Amman's roads, it is moving towards its scheduled privatisation next year with few reports of trouble among its employees. World Bank officials visiting Jordan earlier this summer said they were particularly happy with the way the PTC is moving, with a gradual reduction in workforce and provisions for what is left of it to be employed by transport franchisees.

These are two minor success stories of the privatisation process which seem to suggest that taking ownership away from the state is not going to lead to significant problems among the labour force. However, this is a drop in the ocean compared to the size of Jordan's labour force, and small beer in comparison with the privatisations to come. The PTC and InterContinental combined have a staff of around 1,000, a tiny percentage of the country's labour force and a modest number compared with those of the privatisations to come. These include electricity, air transport, and a lot of other businesses where the number of employees is substantial and the situation regarding privatisation is not clear cut.

With all due respect to the new government, some of the members of which are talented and sincere, the inertia of the present system is going to remain a formidable obstacle to privatisation. This does not mean that the process is doomed, but underscores the crucial role that has to be played by the political leadership in explaining privatisation to those who feel they might be adversely affected. Privatisation may run against interests of powerful pressure groups, and it will take a strong commitment by the government to overcome these. The privatisation programme will also have to include provisions relating to employees of enterprises to ensure that the burden of reform does not fall upon the workforce. To that end, participation of employees in owning privatised enterprises on favourable terms must be considered.

So is privatisation going to happen on a large scale in Jordan soon, and if so will it have a positive impact on the labour force? The way things look at the moment, the answer on both counts is — you guessed it — "maybe." Still, the government should realise that not privatising is going to be far more dangerous and harmful to everybody in the long run than privatising and causing a bit of manageable suffering.

The writer is the director of the Jordan Economic Development Association. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Letters

'Once bitten, twice shy'

To the editor:

INFORMATION MINISTER Nasser Judeh's message to journalists on Tuesday was a positive, highly welcomed one by many who attended the gathering. The minister reached out to journalists, many of whom he described as friends, and declared a new era of truce between the media and the government. But despite what Mr. Judeh described as the intended "goodwill" policy he and the cabinet members are willing to adopt in dealing with the press, journalists remained somewhat reserved in their reaction. The reason being that the press in Jordan has been bitten once too many times by the government, and as the saying goes: once bitten twice shy.

Mr. Judeh called for communication and cooperation between the official and independent media channels and promised transparency on the part of the government. But many journalists, albeit hailing this fresh attitude, cannot put behind them the latest blow to the freedom of the press that the former government left in its wake, and the fact of the matter is that if Mr. Judeh promises to keep an open mind regarding the law and not use it against journalists and journalism in Jordan, there are no guarantees that any other coming government will do the same.

The minister needs not apologise for a law he had no part in proposing or endorsing, but he is expected, however, to work together with his colleagues in the government and in the independent press to ease the pinch of the new press law. For that to happen, a lot of effort and dedication is required as well as plenty of understanding. By understanding why and how the gap between the former government and the media widened until the two became sworn enemies, Mr. Judeh can play his cards right in order to restore the press' confidence in the government. Journalists are willing to reciprocate the effort exerted by Mr. Judeh and the rest of the government team, but I think that this time around, it is the government that has to make the initiative and the extra effort to restore not only journalists' but also all Jordanians' trust and respect. Mr. Judeh's task, like any information minister's, is by no means an easy one, but his is especially difficult as he has to pick up the pieces, throw them out the window and then build a new model for the press-government relationship.

Jordanians in general, and journalists in particular, will be anxiously and carefully monitoring the steps the new government will take to repair a lot of damage done in the past few months, and will definitely give credit where/credit is due.

Natasha Bukhari
 Amman

Save them from the streets

To the editor:

I KNOW it is a bit weird to say that I miss seeing the children on the traffic lights. Usually I save some sweets for the one who knocks on my car window begging. Several days ago I noticed their absence which I later learned was due to official restrictions. What I missed in them is the purity and innocence they represent; but it's an abused innocence, not so pure — a second-hand one.

Their place should not be on the streets but in schools, summer camps and/or summer schools — but definitely not on streets.

It was interesting to me how they appear and disappear so often. The answer I got was not satisfying. What appears to happen is that they are taken to rehabilitation centres, then dragged to court where their parents would swear to take care of them in the future and not misuse them anymore in quest for a sum of money. Once they are out again they head back to their quarters on the streets as usual. And so the cycle goes on.

Thanks to the Ministry of Social Development's follow-up on young street vendors, but no thanks. It does a good job in preventing their absence temporarily! But it should take steps to make their absence from our streets permanent!

Rula Samain Naffa
 Amman

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Society on the move

Memories, occasions and hopes

ON FRIDAY Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and Princess Sarvath celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. Married in double ceremonies in Pakistan and Jordan, the Royal couple will gather round with their four children — Their Royal Highnesses Princess Rahma and her husband Ala'a Bataineh, Princess Sumaya and her husband Nasser Judeh, Princess Badiya and Prince Rashid — and their four grandchildren, Tariq, Zein Al Sharaf, Ali, Sukayna and the sons and daughters of Princess Sumaya and Nasser Judeh. Hearty congratulations and wishes for many more blessings.

BY ROYAL DECREE: Wednesday saw six Royal Decrees issued in varying realms. Two decrees authorised the awarding of Jordan's Independence Medal of the First Order to Ammar Nimer Hmond, Jordan's ambassador to Lebanon, and to Hmoud Musleh Qatarnah, the Kingdom's ambassador to Iraq. For both envoys this is their first ambassadorial assignment. Other decrees authorised Director General of the Civil Defence Department, Maj. General Theeb Maani and CDD Brigadier General Hussein Khasawneh to carry the international medals awarded to them by the International Organisation for Civil Protection and the Pakistani president respectively. Another decree approved the extension of tenure of Ambassador Bahjat Tubbara to Canberra until the end of this year. Lastly, a Royal Decree endorsed the appointment of Abdullah Khawaldeh as director general of Aqaba Railroad Corporation. A round of applause to all.

AND MAY THE BEST PERSON WIN: With the flurry of excitement (upbeat and otherwise) that surrounds a government change, there is usually the secondary, but no less anxiety-stirring round of the "wait by the phone marathon." The hopefuls this time are those seeking to jump into the seats vacated by the appointment of their occupiers to the cabinet. The prize seats as of this printing are president of University of Jordan, which was held by Dr. Fawzi Gharaibeh, who is now education minister; the director general of the Jordan Cement Factories Company, held until last Thursday by Abdul Ilah Khatib, now foreign minister; and the director general of the Jordan Securities Commission, the newly created post held by Dr. Michel Marro, who was sworn in as finance minister. We hear the competition for the posts is fierce, and the decision-makers are said to be weighing every candidate's qualifications to the milligramme. So it may very well take several more days before announcements of "and the winner is..." are made public. Meanwhile former ministers, past and more recent, who have much free time on their hands should be comforted that theirs is an ever-growing club.

TO THE BIG APPLE: The diplomatic scene last week centred on the bidding of farewell to Qatari Ambassador Nasr Ben Abdul Aziz Al Nasr, who leaves Jordan next week for New York. The ambassador, who only a few months ago was honoured with the prestigious distinction of dean of the Amman diplomatic corps, will become ambassador to the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations. At a reception he hosted last Thursday, Nasr had the good fortune of welcoming several members of the new cabinet of Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, as well his many colleagues, associates and friends. Nasr will



Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath enjoy an afternoon with their grandchildren (left to right, Tariq, Ali, Sukayna and Zein El Sharaf (photo by Boghos)

travel first to Doha for two days then head for New York where the United Nations is to begin its new session around Sept. 9. Due to arrive in Amman shortly after Nasr's departure is his successor Sheikh Fahed Ben Jassin Ben Abdullah Al Thani, who until his appointment as ambassador to Jordan has been director of Qatar's Audit Bureau. The deanship of the diplomatic corps now passes on to Russian Federation Ambassador Alexander Solonov who has served in Amman since Feb. 1993.



Qatari Ambassador Nasr Ben Abdul Aziz Nasr welcomes Minister of Tourism Akel Biltaji to a farewell reception at the embassy last Thursday

SECOND TIME AROUND: Although it has been said, by Israeli diplomats that is, that every Israeli foreign service officer's dream is to be appointed to the state's embassy in London, one envoy has taken the path less travelled. Back in town is Shalom Tourgeman, who only last year left his post as the Israeli Embassy's first press attaché to head the London embassy's press office. This time Tourgeman's assignment, one he took of his own free will, is as political counsellor. He replaces Ariva Raz who has returned to the foreign ministry.

NORTHERN CEREMONY: It may have been a stroke of fate that we missed an event this past week, as most reports on it were confused and confusing. But here it is nonetheless. On Tuesday Jordan and Israel celebrated the fifth

anniversary of the Palestinian-Israeli peace accords in the northern town of Baqoura. The celebrations were organised by the Jordanian Youth Society for Peace and the United Kibbutzim movement, which have been running a youth camp in the area with more than one hundred Israeli and a nearly equal number of Jordanian and Palestinian youths. The celebration, attended by His Royal Highness Prince Raed Bin Zeid, Israeli Minister of Interior Avigdor Kahalani, and Israeli Ambassador to Jordan Oded Eran. With the ceremony over and the VIPs making their exit, the campers on Wednesday sailed across Lake Tiberias on Wednesday to continue their peace camp experience, crossed the Sea of Galilee by boat today.

UPDATE: We finally received the list of contributing writers to the new Arab Women Writers Series published by Garnet in the U.K. It seems "downstairs" here at the J.T. there was trouble with our fax machine. Our apologies. The writers in the new series, titled "In the House of Silence" and edited by Jordanian writer Fadia Fuqir, are: Liyana Bndr (Palestine), Salwa Bakr (Egypt), Hoda Barakat (Lebanon), Alia Mamdouh (Iraq) Samira Al Mana' (Iraq), Ahlem Mosteghanemi (Algeria), Hanida Na'na (Syria), Aroussia Nofouti (Tunisia), Naval El Saadawi (Egypt), Fawzia Rashid (Bahrain), Hadia Said (Lebanon), Zliar Ounissi (Algeria) and Fadia Fuqir.

FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS: While many of you will be rooting for your favourite team in Friday's Roman Hill Climb, the Lebanese five-car team, led by champion Nabil (Billy) Karam, will be cheered by their own very special fan and fellow race car driver. She is Joelle Behlok, the reigning Miss Lebanon, who arrived in Amman on Wednesday. Behlok will attend this annual favourite event, and, time permitting, will visit sites in the vicinity. Godspeed and good luck to all!

Jennifer Hamarneh



More Windows to open chip talk

By Jean-Claude Elias

MICROSOFT HAVE added another version of their omnipresent Windows operating system (OS) for personal computers. Windows 98 (Win98) has been on the market for a few weeks now and is slowly penetrating offices and homes where a PC is installed. Its predecessor, Win95, constituted a drastic departure from the older Win3.1. But Win98 is not much different from Win95. Simply put, it brings a few improvements, fixes a few bugs (programming errors) and presents an enhanced design of the screens. Before all, its design is seamlessly integrated with Internet browsers. Whereas there is little doubt that sooner or later most of us will make the transition from whatever Windows version we're currently using to Win98, there are a few points to keep in mind when doing the upgrade. Firstly, all those who need a bilingual OS, typically Arabic/English, will have to wait because Win98 is not yet available as such. Secondly some of the peripherals you might have will need an update driver in order to function under the new OS. A driver is a piece of software that lets the OS "understand" how to operate and communicate with a given peripheral like a printer, an external hard disk, a scanner, a digital camera, etc. For instance a page scanner we were using under Win95 refused to work when we upgraded one machine to Win98. Still it was not a disaster — a simple trip on the Internet to the Web site of the scanner's manufacturer was enough to give us a solution. We found an updated driver for Win98 and in a few minutes the problem was solved. Not everybody, however, has access to the Internet or is able to download and install new drivers. Some won't even realise that a new driver is required. U.S. market analysts are saying both Win95 and Win98 are but a transition and that Microsoft are preparing us all for the upcoming Windows NT 5.0OS that is supposed to be the most advanced, the most bug-free and the best OS for the few years to come. Win-NT 5.0 is expected to be released in early 1999. While I am personally anxious to get my hands on Win-NT 5.0 next year I can't but admire the few who are still making excellent use of their PC running under the ancestral, primitive but so efficient MD-DOS operating system.

U.S. Rep. John Lewis still reaching for the summit

By Joanne Kenen Reuters

WASHINGTON — When John Lewis was a student in 1960, he went to Krystal, a Nashville fast food place known for its tiny six-cent hamburgers smothered with chopped onions — and for refusing to serve black people alongside whites. Under pressure from the burgeoning civil rights movement, some Nashville department stores and lunch counters had started to desegregate by then. But like most, Krystal had not, recalled Lewis, now a Democratic congressman from Georgia and author of "Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement." When some black students decided the time had come to seat themselves at the whites counter, Krystal waitresses dumped buckets of water and detergents on them, doused them with a hose and turned the air conditioner to an uncomfortable chill. Finally the manager walked out with his staff, locking the door and flipping a machine on as he left. It was a fumigator and, within seconds, a toxic white cloud filled the room. Lewis and his friends were saved only because someone walking by mistook the fumes for smoke and called the fire department. The incident was not the worst moment Lewis has endured as a local activist in Nashville and later as national chair of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, an upstart but influential civil rights group that sought to be both militant and nonviolent with its sit-ins, marches and voter registration drives in the early 1960s. The Freedom Rides through Mississippi, the historic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, the nights in Southern jails and along menacing rural highways had moments more brutal and more terrifying. Lewis recalled in an interview with Reuters. "At Selma I thought I saw death," "I don't mean to sound dramatic but at Selma I thought I saw death. I really did," Lewis said, recalling the bloody 1965 attack on unarmed marchers at the Edmund Pettus bridge. Growing up dirt-poor in rural Alabama, Lewis spent his childhood picking cotton, trying to get an education and practicing his preaching with the family's chickens as a congregation. The first member of his family to go to college, he attended the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville and immersed himself in the civil rights movement. A strong believer in nonviolence and racial co-existence and an admirer of Martin Luther King Jr. even when that became unfashionable among young black militants, he watched the movement tear itself apart. Eventually, he chose a direct role in the political system he had never totally abandoned. He held local office in Atlanta and then won a seat in Congress in a 1986 upset over the better known, smoother-talking Julian Bond, once his close friend and comrade in the movement. Lewis took the tide of his book from a terrifying moment when he was a four-year-old deep in cotton country. As a violent storm approached, an aunt heeded 15 small children — Lewis, his brothers and sisters and cousins — inside. The wooden floor began to bend and a corner of the room began to lift as the wind tugged the little house toward the sky. The aunt told the children to line up and clasp hands. They walked toward the corner that was rising, and as the other side of the house began to move up they walked over there. "And so it went, back and forth, 15 small children walking with the wind, holding that trembling house down with the weight of our small bodies," Lewis wrote. Now, he sees that as a metaphor for America. "We're trying to hold this house together. In a real sense, during these last 35, 40 years, all of us, black and white, young and old, have been walking together, trying to hold America's house together, trying to quiet the storm, trying to create one house, one family, the American house, the American family," he said in the soft cadences of a man born to preach. "It's very fragile but it's holding together," he added. In his trips through the south, in his home district of Atlanta, or just a short walk to neighbourhoods near the U.S. Capitol, it is easy to see what still needs to be done, where the house is threatening to crack apart. But this summer, as he has made his way through Mississippi and Georgia and his native Alabama speaking about the movement and signing copies of his new book, he has been struck by how many whites and blacks have gathered together to hear him. "A free and open society — a democracy — is by definition an eternal work in progress. We will never reach the top of the mountain. The summit will always recede. It is not there to be reached. It is there to give us a direction, a goal. It is there to lead us higher."

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Asian growth seen needed for Japan recovery

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Asian economies need to recover first before Japan can reverse its own economic slowdown, a global equity markets strategist from Societe Generale (SG) has said.

"Asia demand needs to recover before we can see a recovery in Japanese exports to Asia," said Bijal Shah of S.G. Global Equities' London-based office.

It flew against the conventional view expressed by governments and analysts that Japan must recover first for Asian economies to rise from a crippling year-old financial crisis.

Shah noted that the fall in Japan's exports to Asia by about 20 per cent contributed to about half the decline in Japan's gross domestic product in the first quarter.

"Japanese exports to the U.S. and Europe are already growing. But if Asian demand improved and Japan's exports to Asia improved, Japan would be in a position to increase its employment and get consumers to start spending money again," Shah told reporters here.

Asian economies were on the right track by cutting interest rates and concentrating on increasing domestic demand, he said.

citing the recent falls in interest rates in South Korea and Malaysia.

"Getting the savings rate down in the face of unemployment does require massive cuts in interest rates" to get the economy moving again, he said, adding that if such poli-

cies were in place, the impact on the economy would be seen in at least six months.

"The fact that interest rates are falling (in Asia) means there is a bottom in sight," he said.

Bringing down Japan's savings rate which has risen over three percentage points in the past year entails a reduction in the unemployment rate and a cut in interest rates.

But Japan's massive unemployment following rising bankruptcies and its already low interest rates leave little room for it to stimulate consumption and in turn increase demand for exports from Asia, Shah said.

"Even the tax cuts may only just offset falls in wages which are coming through. It isn't as if Japanese consumers have more income to play with. They don't, even after tax cuts," he said.

Capital spending in Japan was weak because businesses found it difficult to access credit, while the poor demand also discouraged firms from expanding.

Boosting fiscal policy is another recourse to stimulating demand but "this is not a long term solution because Japanese government as yet is not proposing to extend its fiscal spending into next year," he added.

Japan's Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi has announced tax cuts that would far exceed six trillion yen (\$42 billion) and extra government spending of more than 10 trillion yen (\$69 billion).

Rouble melts down, central bank halts support

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's rouble plunged more than 40 per cent against the German mark Wednesday and the bewildered central bank declared it could no longer afford to intervene to support the battered currency.

As a growing sense of panic spread among Russians, acting Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin flew off suddenly to Ukraine where he met Michel Camdessus, managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the main contributor to a \$22.6 billion loan bailout package last month.

The White House urged Russia to take swift action to salvage the rouble and its economy but said there were no plans to convene an emergency meeting of leaders of the Group of Seven main industrialised nations.

"There are no short cuts in restoring market confidence, and the next steps are up to the Russians," White House deputy spokesman Barry Toiv told reporters. Earlier German Finance Minister Theo Waigel had made a similar assessment.

President Boris Yeltsin did not show up at his Kremlin office on Wednesday but instead monitored events from his dacha home outside Moscow, the Kremlin said.

The Kremlin dismissed rumours sweeping U.S. financial markets that Yeltsin might be forced to step down.

"The press service categorically denies this and declares that it is stupid," said Alexei Gromov, deputy chief of the Kremlin press service. Traders said the rumours had boosted the dollar against the mark in New York.

Meanwhile, ordinary Russians rushed to local banks and some stores closed down as they puzzled over what new prices to set.

"People are also withdrawing en masse their rouble and dollar savings from banks," said a bank cashier in the Siberian city of Omsk.

The rouble continued its collapse in German mark trade on the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange (MICEX), and the German currency was fixed at 7.6 roubles per mark from 4.4995 the previous day — a rouble drop of nearly 41 per cent.

Later in the day the central bank said that it had spent \$8.8 billion in July and August to support the rouble, making further widespread intervention impossible. Its foreign exchange and gold reserves were \$15.1 billion on Aug. 14.

The deepening crisis led to declines in European shares.

Frankfurt was hardest hit among major European bourses, with the Xetra-DAX plunging more than three per cent in a reflection of German banks' large exposure to Russian debt.

Russian central bank officials appeared paralysed by the financial chaos, and in desperation voided all morning rouble trade against the dollar. They later said they would not set an official rouble-dollar rate, called the daily fix, for Wednesday, the first such frantic run for cover in recent years.

The bank decreed a Thursday starting rouble rate of 7.86 to the dollar — the same as on Tuesday.

Many Muscovites wandered the streets in a daze, their rouble savings stuffed into their pockets, frantically seeking dollars which had vanished from the streets. Some banks began withholding even rouble deposits.

Like a man invited to stand on quicksand, Chernomyrdin has been unable to stop the rouble's plunge. Yeltsin summoned Chernomyrdin, who was his for-

mer prime minister, back from the political wilderness on Sunday and fired the four-month old cabinet of reformer Sergei Kiriyenko, 36, saying Russia needed a "heavyweight" at the helm.

"Financial and economic policy is a question to which I am giving my attention minute-by-minute," Itar-Tass quoted Chernomyrdin as saying. "I am extremely dissatisfied with the work of the central bank over the last two days."

The Federal Securities Commission Chairman Dmitry Vasilyev later seconded Chernomyrdin's criticism.

Leading post-Soviet economic policymaker Anatoly Chubais was quoted as telling Russian news agencies the economic crisis was more serious than anything it had seen since 1991.

But government officials appeared bewildered by events.

"Do I think they have a coherent plan? No, I don't," said Charles Blitzer, chief emerging markets economist at Donaldson Lufkin and Jenrette in London.

Russia's RTS index of leading shares closed down more than 13 per cent but volume was extremely low, indicating a virtual freeze of trading.

Dollar trading was suspended on MICEX soon after it started because of an immediate drop of about five per cent to 8.26 roubles to the dollar from Tuesday's fix.

The trade — coming after a more than nine per cent decline on Tuesday — was then declared null and void. The rouble was at 6.2 to the dollar 10 days ago.

In a sign that the banking crisis was spreading, the central bank said it had withdrawn the banking licence from one of the country's biggest banks, Bank A.B. Imperial.

Yeltsin, under fire for the devaluation and sudden change in the government, spoke to Chernomyrdin by telephone in the afternoon and said he supported his efforts, the Kremlin said.

Also on Wednesday, Russian Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, whose party is dominant in parliament, demanded that Chernomyrdin abandon a tough monetary course which he said was dictated by the West.

Jordan amends aviation charges

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has announced a new set of handling charges at all three airports and expects a JD3.5 million in increased revenues due to the new arrangement.

The CAA has decreased the landing fees by up to 50 per cent for planes carrying tourist groups or chartered flights to Aqaba.

"The smaller aircraft stand to benefit from the new regulations as their landing fees have been reduced to JD30 from JD60, in order to encourage flights to Jordan," a CAA official said.

Under the new structure, transit passengers will now pay fees for transition at any of the Kingdom's airports.

In addition the CAA will charge engineers, pilots and technicians for tests and

renewal of licences. Airlines will also pay fees of aircraft certificates of registration, renewals of airline operating licences and renewal of licences for aircraft maintenance stations and other aircraft services.

The official who requested anonymity, told the Jordan Times the CAA will also begin charging fees for facilities provided by the CAA, which in the past were available for free.

The fees which CAA charges for landing, or using any of its facilities including authorisations for using Jordanian airspace, or other facilities are less than those charged by neighbouring countries," said the official.

REUTERS • THE BUSINESS OF INFORMATION

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.8070	0.6102	1.5055	144.60	1.5620	1781.20	2.0368	0.0090
DE Mark	0.5634	-	0.3374	0.8330	80.09	0.8641	906.10	1.1276	3.3660
GB Sterling	1.6387	2.9578	-	2.4636	238.89	2.5596	2916.54	3.3346	9.8210
CH Franc	0.6642	1.1639	0.4055	-	96.11	1.0368	1183.44	135.31	4.0266
JP Yen	0.0069	1.2496	0.4215	1.0408	-	1.0801	12.31	140.77	4.1858
CA Dollar	0.6402	1.2316	0.4225	1.0566	1.08	-	1270.80	1.4591	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0129	0.3419	0.0844	1234.11	0.8755	-	11.42	3.3951
NL Guilder	0.4910	0.8866	0.2992	0.7389	70.93	0.7664	873.65	-	2.9712
FR Franc	0.1650	0.2992	0.1007	0.24514	22.85	0.2578	33.63	33.6300	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7555	0.3770	3.6400	0.3071	3.6727	1619.00	3.4010
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2983	0.5317	5.1340	0.4331	5.1801	2142.45	4.7869
Saudi Riyal	0.2662	0.1887	-	0.1004	0.97	0.0816	0.98	404.37	0.0654
Bahraini Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.8642	-	9.66	0.8146	9.74	4029.16	9.8212
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0320	1.0320	-	0.0844	1.01	417.31	0.8343
Kuwait Dinar	3.2563	2.3087	12.2322	1.2275	11.85	-	11.96	4946.27	0.9343
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0228	1.0228	0.9911	0.0838	-	413.59	0.9260
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4688	2.4730	0.2482	2.3963	0.2022	2.4178	-	2.2380
Egyptian	0.2940	0.2085	1.1045	0.1108	1.0703	0.0903	1.0779	446.63	-

Energy		
Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	0.00	0.00
W. Texas	13.58	13.86
Bonny	0.00	0.00
Dubai	12.68	12.41
U.L. Gas	138.00	138.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2662	0.4816	0.16255	0.40125	38.5178
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48215	0.16517	0.41019	39.3856
KW Dinar	3.2563	5.8828	1.88728	4.90677	47.1254
BH Dinar	0.3770	1.79616	1.51865	3.9968	383.73
CY Pound	1.8624	3.3989	1.1475	2.6324	272.036

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	284.2	284.7
Silver (oz's)	5.08	5.09
Platinum (oz's)	362	364
AL (3 Months)	1339	1340
CU (3 Months)	1627	1628
Zinc (3 Months)	1033	1038
Lead (3 Months)	534	535
NI (3 Months)	4070	4085

Labor Fixing						
Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-12-	Year	
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year	
USD	5.6523	5.6875	5.6875	5.6875		
GBP	7.7856	7.7576	7.7600	7.6250		
JPY	0.5664	0.6406	0.6445	0.6445		
DEM	3.4375	3.5000	3.5781	3.6758		
FRF	3.5000	1.7930	1.8750	2.0000		
CHF	1.7500	3.5391	3.5957	3.7012		
ITL	5.0500	4.9070	4.6790			

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	8618.46	-84.19	-0.98	8600.93	8467.48
New York	S&P 500	1082.29	-9.95	-0.91	1092.85	1075.91
London	FT-SE 100	5516	-138.4	-2.45	5654.4	5501.7
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	14866.03	-206.9	-1.37	15113	14866
Paris	CAC 40	3913.17	-116.15	-2.88	4001.06	3899.17
Frankfurt	OAX	6231.61	-140.15	-2.61	6385.28	6210.8

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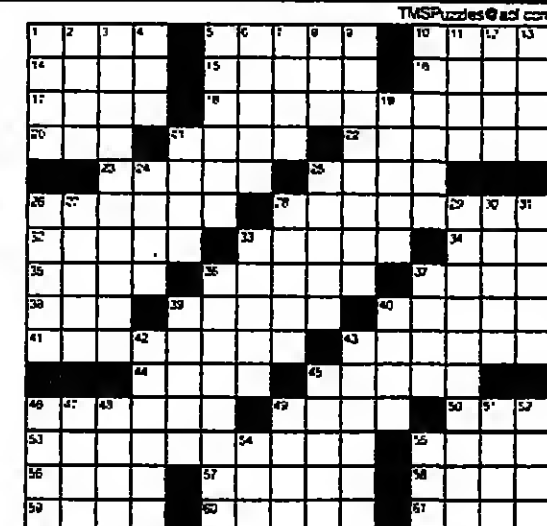
Deadline for submission of applications 5th September 1998.

Shortlisted candidates will be supplied with job description and further details.

Interviews will take place mid-September.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

- ACROSS
- Swiss chain
 - Accumulate
 - Hole-making tools
 - Make a hole
 - Valet's nation
 - Poker token
 - Paradise
 - Like a surprise attack
 - Actress
 - Ullmann
 - Soccer great
 - Instructed beforehand
 - January in Juarez
 - Tenth of MDXL
 - Legislative body
 - Tenets
 - Musical Shaw
 - Saint-Nazaire's river
 - Utter sharply
 - Hard work
 - Flourishes
 - Actress Gopin
 - Tokyo, formerly
 - "The Misfits" star
 - Sierra Nevada resort
 - Artificial plates
 - Aspects
 - Curses!
 - Currency substitute
 - Try hard
 - Runny cheese
 - Silich
 - Dangerously insecure
 - monster
 - Helper
 - German dialect
 - Bator
 - Mongolia
 - Disposition
 - Pock marks
 - Watch over



- DOWN
- Genes
 - New Jersey or California city
 - Act of hindering
 - Indonesian currency unit
 - Current unit
 - Daughter of Darny Thomas
 - Toward shelter
 - Sault Marie
 - Representative collections
 - Functioning
 - Caprice
 - Draw breath
 - High-tailed it
 - Fee for service
 - Sampiras
 - Brad or spike
 - Unlawful activity
 - Fully full
 - Wear away
 - Still places in streams
 - Adapted for grasping
 - Fortune card
 - Secret agents
 - Ear parts
 - Traded without money
 - Rate of speed
 - Pear-shaped
 - Seize
 - Hoisted and secured
 - Forces to accept through deceit
 - Count on
 - Meat in a can
 - Small combo
 - Make over
 - Former West German capital
 - Vivacity
 - Magic stick
 - Wrath
 - Potbelly

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



"Maybe I got married too young. Halfway through the reception, my mom made me sit in the time-out chair."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VALEG

DOPKE

TISMEY

RECUPS

Answer: A

Saturday's

Jumbles: GOING BRAIN VANITY HALLWAY

Answer: What the abstract artists vivid use of color was considered — BRILLIANT

A review of news from the Arabic Press

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great idea, but it might have to be shelved. In the meantime, you feel obligated to take care of old business. Don't spend a lot of time worrying — stay busy. Things will look much brighter tomorrow.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You're running into more opposition than you have for the past few days, but you can handle it. You're still on a roll. You're getting what you want so quickly you may forget anything else could happen. Don't worry, your chances of winning again are enormous. Go for the gold!

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Looks like somebody's nagging you. Instead of resisting, thank the person for reminding you and scurry to complete the task. That could be plural, too, as in tasks and people. No matter how many there are, try to get everything done. It'll make room for creativity.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) There are problems today, but most of them don't affect you. You might have to deal with other people's worries though. Help them get through the problems by figuring out what needs to be done next. It looks you'll be able to do that better than they will, so offer your services.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you like challenges, you'll love today. There will be one right after another. You can figure out the technical stuff, but it might be tough to get along with a person you don't understand. Figure out if this person is leading you in the direction you want to go. If not, don't go.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) There are several major conflicts going on today, but you don't seem to be directly involved. One of them may impact your work, however. It's as if something you're trying to get done can't happen yet because something you need hasn't come in the mail. There's a hassle with travel, too. Best not to start your weekend vacation until tomorrow.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Graf reaches quarters as Tauziat bows out

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut (AFP) — Steffi Graf eased into the quarter-finals of the Pilot Pen International Tuesday with a 6-1, 6-3 second-round victory over Slovakia's Henrieta Nagyova.

In first round matches, sixth seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland also advanced when she ousted Rita Grande of Italy 6-4, 6-3, but fifth seeded Nathalie Tauziat of France was defeated 7-6 (7/4), 6-0 by unseeded compatriot Amelie Mauresmo.

In other matches, Germany's Anke Huber continued her comeback from injury with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Italian Sylvia

Farina. American wild card entry Chanda Rubin rallied to overcome Russia's Elena Likhovtseva 3-6, 6-3, 6-1, and qualifier Alexia Dechaume-Balleret of France outlasted Joannette Kruger of South Africa 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (8/6).

Virginia Ruano-Pascual of Spain beat fellow qualifier Anne Miller of the United States 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 to earn a second round match-up with top seed Lindsay Davenport.

Graf swept through the first set with ease against a nervous opponent, winning the first three games and conceding only three points in the last three games of the first set. In the second set,

she held off a break point at 0-1, broke for 3-2 and recovered from 0-40 to lead 5-3, breaking again for a 61 minute victory.

"I felt good," said Graf. "I played extremely well, and in the second set when she started to settle down a little we had some good rallies. PhyMauresmo established herself as a serious contender when she reached the final of the German Open in May as a qualifier, beating Lindsay Davenport and Jana Novotna.

Since then, success has been hard to come by, and her best result has been to reach the quarter-finals in Prague the week after Wimbledon.

After sneaking the first set on a tiebreak, it was obvious that Tauziat did not have the taste for battle, and a brief break for rain at 4-0 failed to halt Mauresmo's momentum.

"It's hard for me to be motivated and to concentrate on what I'm doing. That's my problem these days, but tonight was OK," said Mauresmo. "I tried to keep her on the baseline because when she goes to the net she's very dangerous. I was serving better than her as well, but I'm not surprised I won. I know I can beat the best players."

Greene runs brilliantly to win 100m

LAUSANNE (AFP) — World champion Maurice Greene ran superbly to clock 9.92sec and leave a star-studded 100m field struggling in his wake at the IAAF Grand Prix meeting here on Tuesday.

Trinidad and Tobago's Ato Boldon may have run the fastest time in the world this year of 9.86sec, but he played just a bit part to fleet-footed American Greene here.

After two false starts, Boldon started well, but at the 30m mark Greene went up a gear to leave him trailing and only his second-placed countryman John Drummond and third-placed Obadele Thompson of the Bahamas gave him any competition at all. Both clocked 10.00.

Two continental champions crowned last week were well and truly beaten to show the difference in standard between the Americans and the rest on the night.

African champion Frankie Fredericks of Namibia was sixth and European champion Darren Campbell took seventh spot.

World champion Marion Jones crushed the field to notch up a 100m time just 0.01sec outside her own world best this year.

American Jones finished at least two metres ahead of the field to clock 10.72 — which no other athlete has managed this season.

Greece's Ekaterina Thanou finished second in 11.02 and American Inger Miller took third spot with 11.03.

Nigeria's Glory Alozie just beat out Jamaica's Michelle Freeman in a photo finish after they both ran 12.56sec in the 100m hurdles.

In an incredible finish over the last 30m, Kenya's 800m world champion William Chirchir hustled through from fourth place to win the two-lap event in 1:45.63.

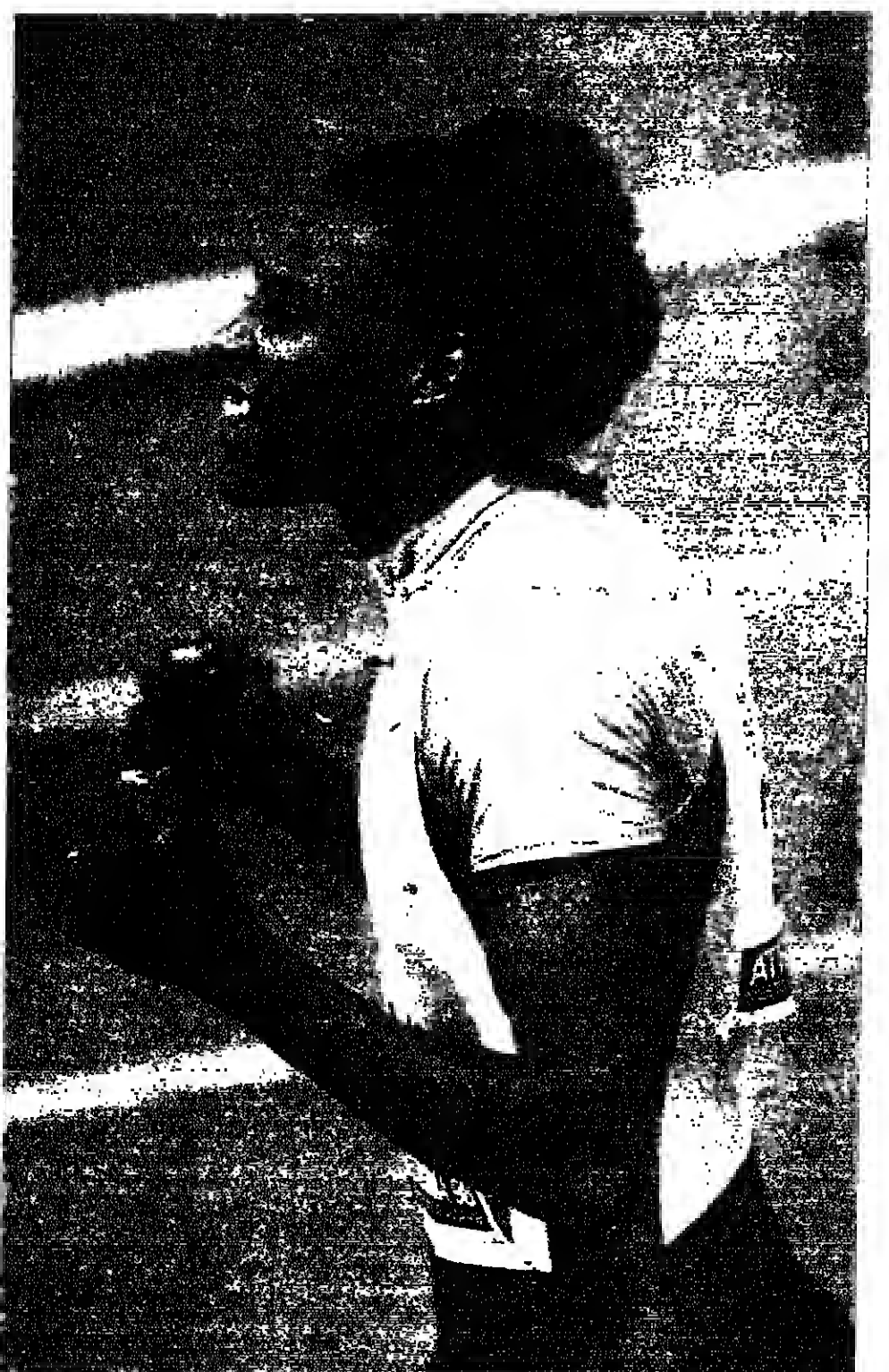
Countryman David Kiptoo of Kenya, who finished second, and third-placed Arthermon Hatungiaman of Burundi and Cuba's Norberto Tellez were nonplussed as the diminutive Chirchir burst through the middle.

Olympic champion Michael Johnson easily beat the field in the 400m on the same track where he once ran 43.66 — his fastest time outside major championships and American trials. Johnson clocked 44.28 this time.

The men's 400m saw France's world champion Stephane Diagana just hold on to first place in 48.45 despite a blistering



Maurice Greene (USA), right, wins the 100m during the Grand Prix meeting 'Athletissima' in Lausanne. Next to him Seun Ogunkoya and on the left Francis Obikwelu, both from Nigeria. Greene reached 9.92 seconds (AP Photo)



U.S. Sprinter Marion Jones celebrates after winning the 100 metre race, at the Athletissima in Lausanne, Switzerland (AP Photo)

finish from American Eric Thomas, for whom the finish line came a metre or two too soon.

In the women's 400m hurdles, Jamaica's Olympic champion Deon Hemmings won in 53.27sec to beat inform American Kim Batten into second spot.

Portugal's Carla Sacramento won the women's mile in 4:23.41 in the absence of Olympic 800m and 1,500m champion Svetlana Masterkova

of Russia, who pulled out at the last minute.

Algeria's Noureddine Morceli won the 1,500m with 3:34.98. American Allen Johnson took the 110m hurdles with 13.07 after just edging out Britain's Colin Jackson and Norway's Trine Hattestad won the women's javelin after throwing

67.98m. Daniel Komen of Kenya had his attack on the world 3,000m record end in failure and he could not even win the event.

Fellow countryman Luke Kipkosgei clocked 7:36.48, nearly 16 seconds outside Komen's world record, to finish first and edge Komen into second spot.

Britain's newly-crowned European triple jump champion Jonathan Edwards could only finish second with 17.00m to Germany's Charles-Mikael Friedek who jumped 17.07. France's Jean Galfione won the men's pole vault with 5.90m.



Fenerbahce's Bosnian striker Elvir Balic, left, who scored his team's goal fights for the ball with Paer Karlsson of IFK Goteborg during their UEFA Cup second qualifying round second leg match in Istanbul. Fenerbahce defeated IFK Goteborg 1-0 and moved into the first round of the UEFA Cup (AP Photo)

Sydney ticket prices to cost up to \$830

SYDNEY (AFP) — Tickets for the Sydney 2000 Olympics will cost between A\$10 (\$6.0) and A\$1,382 (\$830 US), it was announced Wednesday.

With 9.6 million tickets available, the most expensive will be for finals sessions in swimming, athletics, men's basketball and artistic gymnastics. A top of the range session ticket will cost A\$455.

The A\$1,382 tickets are for prime seats at the opening and closing ceremonies.

Under the ticketing policy of the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG), buyers will be limited to four tickets for the opening and closing ceremonies and six for any sporting events.

Applications will be only through mail order, starting in mid-1999, with session preferences to be listed in order and full payment made in advance for the first preference.

Some 750,000 tickets will be allocated to foreign national Olympic committees to be on sold within their countries.

SOCOG said Australians would have the greatest per capita access to tickets of any Olympic host nation, with 75 per cent of tickets available to them.

In Atlanta in 1996 there were 12.2 million tickets on offer for a U.S. population of 260 million, while in Barcelona there were 4.2 million tickets for 39 million Spaniards.

Fifty two per cent of total tickets will go to the public offer, one per cent to the Olympic Club, seven per cent to the Gold Pass Stadium scheme, 11 per cent to Australian sponsors, four per cent to global sponsors and eight per cent to foreign national Olympic committees.

The media will have 12 per cent of seat space and athletes five.

A total of 1.5 million tickets costing between \$10 and \$19 are to be made available through an Olympic Opportunity scheme aimed at Australian schools, community groups and the underprivileged.

They will be for events such as swimming practice sessions, some basketball, triathlon, volleyball and canoeing.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Injured Freeman withdraws from KL Games

MELBOURNE (AFP) — World 400 metre champion Cathy Freeman withdrew from the Australian Commonwealth Games team Wednesday after failing to recover from a foot injury. Her doctor Peter Fuller said she needed to rest from sprinting for one to two months, ruling out next month's Kuala Lumpur Games and the World Cup in Johannesburg. "The injury will simply take more time to heal," Fuller said in a statement. Freeman injured her foot while racing in Oslo in July and has been unable to train at full pace since.

Bangladesh cuts KL Games squad

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladesh has slashed its squad for next month's Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur as it believes it only has a realistic chance in the cricket and shooting events, officials said Wednesday. Critics had previously slammed administrators for naming 81 team members for the Games, many in sports in which the country has little hope of a medal. Now, the team will only number 39 members. The Ministry of Sports said, Hockey, boxing, weightlifting, athletics and swimming members were dropped from the team after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed intervened, press reports said. The team will only include competitors for cricket and shooting.

Moeller quits PSV for Spain

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Danish international Peter Moeller is to sign a three year contract with Spanish first division side Oviedo. The 26-year-old PSV Eindhoven striker will make his debut in the opening league match against Real Sociedad this weekend. "The contract will be signed before the weekend so I can play against Real Sociedad," said Moeller on Wednesday.

Cyclist banned after failing drugs test

LONDON (AFP) — Cyclist Gary Edwards has been suspended from England's Commonwealth Games team after failing a drugs test, the British Cycling Federation (BCF) announced Wednesday. The sprint cyclist is reported to have breached regulations governing testosterone levels in tests carried out by the U.K. Sports Council. The second or 'B' sample is being tested at King's College, London, the only laboratory in Britain accredited by the International Olympic Committee.

Merson wins ban appeal

LONDON (AFP) — Middlesbrough midfielder Paul Merson won his appeal against a pre-season sending-off in Holland after the Football Association (FA) agreed to reduce his three-match ban to a booking on Wednesday. Merson and Boro manager Bryan Robson attended an FA hearing, using video evidence to back up their claim for wrongful dismissal following the game against Heerenveen. The FA's disciplinary committee agreed that the match referee should only have booked Merson instead of giving him a red card and the England international is now available to play for Boro at home to Derby on Saturday.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Higham Yanes Theatre
	Robert Duvall & Tea Leoni...in DEEP IMPACT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Leonardo Di Caprio...in THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Comedian Adel Imam...in AL ZA'EEM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	Robert Duvall & Tea Leoni...in DEEP IMPACT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' NINJA TURTLES Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria GODZILLA Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria CITY OF ANGELS Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 Adel Imam...in AL ZA'EEM at 10:30 p.m.	WATCH OUT FOR THE NEW PLAY

Jazireh withdraws its players from national team lineup leaving for Taiwan today

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Jazireh, the Kingdom's former basketball champions, Wednesday announced that they were withdrawing their players from all national team lineups on the eve of the men's team's departure to Chinese Taipei to take part in the William Jones International Tournament.

A Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) press release made available to the media by press time stated that the federation was stunned by an "unexpected letter" from Al Jazireh Club chairman stating that they "were pulling their players from all national teams supervised by the JBF." The letter noted that Al Jazireh's stand "was as a result of bias against their players."

The decision means that four Jazireh players are excluded from the final lineup leaving for Taipei Thursday.

A JBF official expressed remorse over the issue especially that Al Jazireh's key players had been named to the final lineup leaving with the team tomorrow.

"We were not warned nor were we previously told that there was a problem. Otherwise we would have solved any issue in a matter ensuring the team's best interest," JBF secretary Mohammad Yabli Hassan told the Jordan Times.

He said that the JBF held an emergency meeting Wednesday and decided to name two other players (one from Orthodox and another from Ahli clubs) to the lineup which will now include only ten players.

The national team beat its Iraqi counterpart 93-65 in the first friendly match in preparation for the Taipei Tournament. The second match was held late Wednesday with the lineup missing four Jazireh players.

A JBF official said the federation regretted Al Jazireh's decision when the team is leaving to compete in an international event in preparation for the Games in Amman next year.

JBF press release noted that "action was taken against the club and players coming from their national duty in

accordance with regulations of the Ministry of Youth and Culture."

Jordan will join nine teams representing Asia in addition to the Costa Rica in the week-long William Jones tournament starting Aug. 31.

The participating teams have been divided into two groups. The first includes Jordan, Chinese Taipei, UAE, Korea, Malaysia while Group 2 includes Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines and Costa Rica.

The top two teams in each group will play in the semifinals while the rest will play for 5th-10th places.

Tournament regulations stipulate that the host team qualifies to the semifinals, regardless of its results in the preliminary round.

This adds a burden on Jordan which has to win Group 1 to ensure qualification since taking second place in case Taipei does not take first place will drop Jordan out of contention because Taipei will then qualify with the first placed team.

Jordan opens its matches against Taipei and then plays the UAE, Korea and Malaysia.

The Kingdom was placed seventh in the last Asian Basketball Championship which was held in Saudi Arabia last year.

The team had a training camp in Athens during which they played six matches winning two and losing the rest.

The team includes mainly under-22 players and are joined by veterans Hilal Barakat and Yousef Zaghloul, in addition to Nasser Bassam, Faisal Nsour, Fadi Saqqa, Mohammad Shammal, Ayman Du'eis and Ashraf Samara. Jan Sahlieb and Kamal Helo were recalled to the lineup after Naser Alawneh, Ma'an Odeh, Husam Lutfi and Yousef Abu Bakr of Al Jazireh withdrew.

Issam Aridah named director of 9th Pan-Arab Games

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Al Hassan Wednesday named Issam Aridah, the ministry's secretary-general, as director of the 9th Pan-Arab Games which will be held in Amman next summer.

The ministry also set the final date for the Games and sent Arab countries the invitations for the event which will be held Aug. 15-31, 1999.

HRH Prince Abdullah, chairman of the Games higher organising committee also chaired a meeting Wednesday and discussed with officials the progress of preparations and facilities with the start of the one-year countdown.

The meeting was attended by Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Vice-President Mouaffaq Fawwaz who expressed his delight at naming Aridah as Games chairman.

"He is the right person for the job. It is an enormous responsibility. He will be expected to tackle all issues related to the event, but he has the experience to handle it," Fawwaz told the Jordan Times.

"Aridah is broadminded, energetic and a pleasure to work with. We will all be working with him to make the event a success," Fawwaz added.

Fawwaz said 19 federations which had submitted their plans to the JOC to get funding for their Pan-Arab Games preparations had so far

received JD250,000.

He said the funds covered coaches' salaries, training camps, hosting teams for friendlies, players' allocations including transportation fees, and dietary needs.

So far, 12 primary games have been set for the Pan-Arab Games while the other 7 are still undecided. Fawwaz explained that if over five countries express willingness to compete in a certain event then more games can be added to the original list.

He said there are 10 compulsory games for men and optional ones which the host country could add. The compulsory events are: Basketball, athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, handball, swimming, soccer, wrestling, weightlifting and cycling. Optional ones include squash, taekwondo and karate.

The eight compulsory games for women are: Basketball, athletics, gymnastics, volleyball, handball, swimming, taekwondo and karate.

Fawwaz reiterated that the Asian Games held in Bangkok in December will be an invaluable opportunity to prepare and assess the Kingdom's teams' preparedness.

He said JD11 million was earmarked for the Pan-Arab Games with JD4 million allocated for spending this year. The government has approved the loan to the JOC by a soft loan drawn from the Social Security Corporation.

However, the JOC official again warned that the pace of work was

too slow.

Fawwaz said the JOC has asked federations to prepare their 1998-99 training plans with the needed funds but added that some of them had exaggerated figures which were illogical.

He explained that the JOC has undertaken to pay salaries to qualified coaches and asked federations to increase training and assess preparedness through training camps abroad.

Since the Arab Sports Federation (ASF) advanced the date of the upcoming Games to 1999 instead of 2001, the Council of Arab Sports Ministers increased aid to the Kingdom to enable it to prepare infrastructure and update sports facilities ahead of the largest gathering of Arab youth.

Aid from the Arab League had been raised to \$200,000 while the Council of Arab Ministers will grant \$1,000,000 instead of \$700,000.

Additional sponsorship for Jordan's bid will be garnered through slashing the 50 per cent ASF margin of profit on promotion and television coverage in addition to selling television broadcasting rights to private companies, which would secure millions needed to cover costs.

Infrastructure plans include the building of a multi-purpose indoor stadium at Al Hussein Youth City with a capacity for 7,000 spectators; an Olympic-size swimming pool; a track and field stadium and elec-

tronic timing machines.

The rest of the facilities would be utilised at private universities and educational institutions that have already expressed their willingness to host some of the events.

Lebanon, which hosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to help in construction of sport facilities destroyed during the civil war.

The 1997 Beirut Games witnessed the best Jordanian showing since the Pan-Arab Games were launched. Competing in 14 of the 20 events, Jordan finished 5th overall among 19 competing countries, taking a total of 40 medals, including 10 gold, 8 silver and 22 bronze medals.

Jordan's athletes gained more gold medals in Beirut than in all the past 7 Pan-Arab Games together where they took a total of 49 medals, including 7 gold, 16 silver, 26 bronze.

The Amman Games will be followed by a Special Arab Games for the Handicapped.

The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

Bjorkman advances, Kucera ousted in Brookline

BROOKLINE, Massachusetts (R) — Top-seeded Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden advanced but Karol Kucera of Slovakia, the second seed, was ousted in the first round of the \$315,000 MFS Pro Tennis Championships on Tuesday.

Bjorkman needed only 65 minutes to beat qualifier Arnaud Clement of France 6-2, 6-3 while Kucera complained of poor lighting and windy conditions in his 6-2, 6-3 defeat by American Jeff Tarango.

Kucera, preparing for the U.S. Open starting next week, held serve only two times in the two sets.

"I just couldn't concentrate out there," said Kucera, who won last week in New Haven. "The conditions were very poor."

I'll just have to go back to practice and get ready for the Open."

Tarango was pleased with his success. "It was one of my best wins in a while," he said. "The return is the best part of my game and I think I surprised him by hitting so hard and so deep."

Bjorkman — a U.S. Open semifinalist last year, when his world ranking soared to fourth — has slipped to 12th. "I tried to play aggressive tennis today and I think I forced him into making mistakes," the Swede said. "I was pretty much doing what I want-



Michael Chang

ed to do."

Fourth-seeded

American Michael Chang escaped some tight situations in the first set before prevailing over

Romanian Andrei Pavel 7-5, 6-2.

Chang was down 3-5, set point in the first set before blasting an ace to start his comeback. He

bad two breaks in the second set and had little trouble running out the match with his superior ground strokes.

Seventh seed Andrea Gaudenzi of Italy tumbled to Czech Jin Novak 4-6, 6-1, 6-1.

"I don't know what happened to him," said Novak, "whether he lost his power or confidence. I was nervous at the start, but in the last two sets I played well from the baseline and my forehand was working."

Lionel Roux, the French veteran whose world ranking dropped to 125th after six months of inactivity because of injuries, surprised Paraguayan Ramon Delgado 6-4, 6-2.

Delgado, winner over Pete Sampras in the French Open and a semifinalist last week at Indianapolis, said he was not feeling up to par physically but credited Roux for his superior play.

"My shoulder and wrist were both bothering me," said the 63-ranked Delgado.

Rios knocked out; Arazi upsets Ivanisevic in U.S open warmup

COMMACK (AP) — Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil won a South American showdown, upsetting Marcelo Rios of Chile 6-3, 7-6 (7-4) in the opening round of the Hamlet Cup.

Rios, the tournament's top seed, lost his second match in as many days. He lost his ranking as the top-ranked player in the world on Monday.

Rios has lost three of his last four matches since parting with Larry Stefanki, his coach.

Rios was ranked No. 1 for six weeks earlier this year.

Kuerten said he was looking forward to playing Rios.

"People asked me if I was disappointed that I drew him in the first round," Kuerten said Tuesday, "but I really wanted him. The talent on this level is very high and you should want to play the great players. That's why we're out here."

Rios said he was "bothered by an allergy and my entire body is weak. Maybe I need a rest to get ready for the U.S. Open."

In another upset, Hicham Arazi of Morocco beat seventh-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (7-2).

The tournament's No. 2 seed, Patrick Rafter of

Australia, flirted with defeat as well Tuesday. Rafter, one of the hottest players on the ATP Tour over the last 10 weeks, broke Javier Sanchez's serve in the final game of a 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 victory over the Spaniard.

Rafter, who returned from a weekend break in Bermuda after his career-best 11-match winning streak was snapped by Guillaume Raoux last week, used a strong backhand to overtake Sanchez, who is ranked 101st, for the decisive point.

The Australian, the third-ranked player in the world, returned serve with his backhand and the ball hit the top of the net and flew past Sanchez. It was the second such point in the set and third in the match that he won in like manner.

Rafter, 25, is 22-3 with three tournament titles over the last 10 weeks, with five matches won over top 10 opponents, including Pete Sampras.

Rafter, who had seven aces to four for Sanchez, has a 41-16 match record this year with four championships.

"I hit the ball well in the first set but was very flat in the second," Rafter said. "I felt there was no use pushing myself, so I went through the motions determined that I could get a second win in the third set. That's what happened."

This is the quickest court I have played on all summer, but I'll get adjusted to it once I get match sharp. I hadn't played a match since New Haven and just got away from tennis while in Bermuda.

"My mistake was letting Sanchez back into the match. He got stronger as we went along. There was one point in the match when I wondered if I could get back, but make no mistake about it... the energy is back. I want to go all the way here and be even better in the U.S. Open."

Felix Manilla, another Spaniard who is seeded eighth, eliminated countryman Sergi Bruguera 6-4, 6-4 and Felix Dewulf of Belgium outlasted doubles standout Mark Woodforde of Australia 6-4 (7-6) (8-6). Woodforde smashed his racket in frustration.

"I wasn't proud of that," he said. "Losing this match kicked me off. Not once did I come close to breaking serve. Smashing the racket isn't going to make me win, good tennis will. I want to stay in singles until 2000 and be in the Olympics since they are in our country."

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Grand Prix meeting on the left Francis P Photo

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